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ABSTRACT

This special issue explores the relationship between education and empowerment and considers whether it still is valid to assume that school provides the key for people in the lower social strata in America to achieve material well being. Taken together, the essays, poetry, and studies of this issue explore the experience of social marginality in the United States, emphasizing that there is much to celebrate and much to hope for. The following contributions are included: (1) "Editors' Foreword: Marginality and Schooling" (Ramona Hernandez and Silvio Torres-Saillant); (2) "Small Victories or Big Defeats?" (Bruce P. Baskind); (3) "My English" and "Poems" (Julia Alvarez); (4) "The Pitfalls of Comparing Marginal Groups" (Ramona Hernandez); (5) "Dominicans in Higher Education" (Hanan C. Orna); (6) "Dominican High School Students: Hopes and Problems" (Leona Marsh); (7) "Confessions of a Full Professor" (Alfredo Villanueva-Collado); (8) "CUNY and the Puerto Rican/Latino Community: Issues for the 1990s" (Camille Rodriguez and Ramon Bosque-Perez); (9) "English Only: Its Historical Antecedents" (Gerald Meyer); (10) "What's beyond the English Language Amendment: An Update" (Henry Lesnik); (11) "Madre Luna" (Jose Luis Colon Santiago); and (12) "Western Discourse and the Curriculum (The Uniting of Multicultural America)S (Silvio Torres-Saillant). Many contributions contain references. (SLD)

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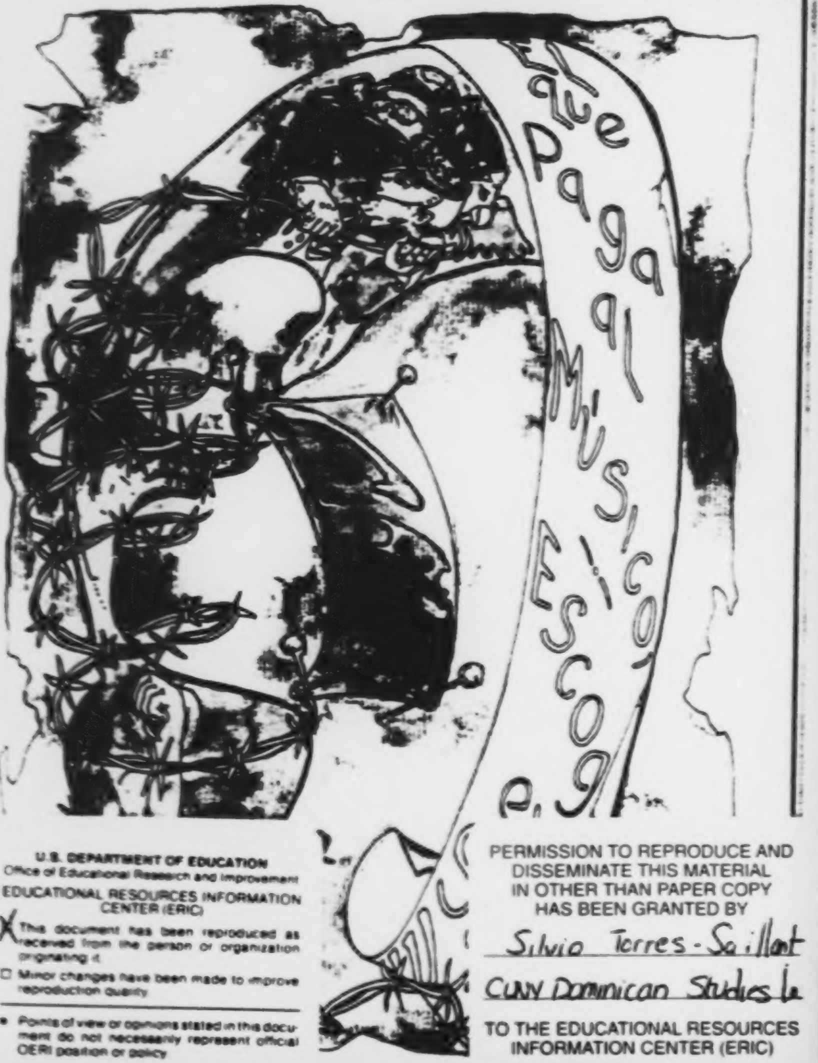

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MINORITIES, EDUCATION, EMPOWERMENT

PUNTO 7 REVIEW: *A Journal of Marginal Discourse*

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Punto 7 Review: A Journal of Marginal Discourse

◆ Minorities, Education, Empowerment ◆

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Marginality and Schooling: Editors' Foreword

THIS ISSUE OF *PUNTO 7 REVIEW: A Journal of Marginal Discourse* explores the relationship between education and empowerment and asks whether it may still be held that school provides the key for people in the lower social strata in America to achieve material well-being. Implicit in the pronouncements of the authors who make up this issue are the differing schools of thought regarding the question. There are those who would challenge the felicitous link traditionally made between schooling and upward mobility as a myth that we have long outgrown. There are also those who still uphold the contrary, claiming that the link retains as much validity for us today as it did for earlier generations of Americans. What few would contest is that, whether one sees it as a key to social betterment or not, there is no easy walk for the disinherited to attain an education.

The obstacles and challenges the majority of our students generally have to confront often constitute downright impediments. Some of the impediments result from barriers that are endemic to the school system from grade school to college. These may take the form of overcrowding, scarcity of resources, inappropriate curricula, incompetent and/or uncommitted teachers, and various kinds of academic bias. Another brand of impediments, deriving from conditions that are pervasive in the society within which the school system exists, is more difficult to fathom and, hence, harder to surmount.

Most of the contributors to this issue bear witness to the remarkable ability our communities require to overcome the obstacles placed before them by social circumstances inside and outside the school. Many of the students we are called upon to serve come from poor families. Since so many of them belong to recent immigrant groups from the Third World, they generally come from ethnic communities that have historically endured institutional discrimination. As a result, when they arrive in college they have often been short-changed already by primary and secondary schools that have left them ill-equipped for the academic demands of higher education.

Our students are as bright as any group of human beings on the planet irrespective of race, ethnicity, gender or class. Let us insist on this truism. Evidently, the disadvantages they may come to college with can be traced not to the constitution of their brains but to the structural configuration of a society that does not guarantee well-being to all its members alike. For, contrary to the rhetoric sponsored by the well-to-do, the elementary — if bitter — truth is that the social conditions of the family one is born into largely determine one's chances for advancement. Attaining an education becomes a very trying task for those at the bottom of the social ladder. In fact, when the disinherited choose to pursue a higher education, a large measure of their energy and concentration must necessarily be spent in overcoming barriers.

James Madison, foremost among the intellectual architects of this nation, thought that "the most durable source of factions has been the various and unequal distribution of property" (Madison 1961:79). Not unlike the other Founding Fathers, Madison believed that social inequality and the ensuing division of people into various interest groups along class lines was inherent to the structure of society. He said, plainly, that: "Those who hold and those who are without property have ever formed distinct interests in society. Those who are creditors, and those who are debtors, fall under a like discrimination" (Madison 1961:79).

Convinced of the inevitability of social inequity, Madison hoped that legislation and government would help to mediate between the "various and interfering interests," although his hope was qualified by the realization that legislative measures and government were also subject to the dynamic of group interest and class differences. The truth of Madison's view has been confirmed times galore throughout the history of the United States when government and legislators have had to take sides. It may safely be asserted that whenever conflict has arisen between different class sectors of society, the State has invariably joined the ranks of the prosperous classes.

When in the summer of 1877 workers throughout the nation went on strike to protest the abuses of the railroad corporations, President Hayes ordered the military to march against the workers, thus choosing to protect the interests of the corporations. When more recently Americans of African descent demanded privileges as basic as the right to vote or the freedom to pick a seat of their choice on the train or bus, governors and other state and city officials used police force to suppress them. When in 1989 City University of New York students, fearing that tuition increases would deprive them of the chance to have a college education, went on strike and took over University buildings, most New York City newspapers urged the Chancellor and the Mayor to have the police march against the striking students even at the risk of mutual injury. The distinguished law enforcement official and mayoral candidate, Rudolph Giuliani, in an article published by *The New York Times* on August 7, 1992, urged Mayor Dinkins to side with Michael O'Keefe, the police officer accused of murdering a Domin-ican in the lobby of a building in Washington Heights. Every time *The New York Post*, police union boss Phil Caruso and some elected officials have lobbied on behalf of convicted felon Occhipinti, the federal agent presently in jail for blatant abuses against small merchants in Washington Heights, the unstated — albeit clearly implicit — logic is that Dominicans, who are among the least empowered of New York minorities, do not deserve the protection of the law. In each of these cases, at any rate, what becomes established beyond reasonable doubt is the inexorability of Madison's view of the unequal structure of society even when imparting justice. Madison did not need the Rodney King case to know that even before the law some of us are simply more equal than others, to echo the Orwellian dictum.

Chances are that those who are unequal will continue to be so until they seize the power that will enable them to become perpetrators of inequality against those weaker than they. A curious case is that of *New York Post* journalist Mike McAlary who these days makes his living defaming the moral character of Dominicans through the pages of the tabloid. What's curious is that he belongs to an ethnic community that in the 1850s was the object of the most vile and repulsive deprecations from journalists in the New York press. Giuliani, likewise, belongs to an ethnic group that endured reproachful depictions and open expressions of contempt from those

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who controlled the media. The first few minutes in the original version of the movie *Scarface* leave little doubt as to the low esteem in which the likes of Howard Hughes held that particular community. Having gone through the stage of historical amnesia that the mainstream society favors and induces in those wishing to belong, McAlary and Giuliani in their tirades against Dominicans echo too closely the anti-Irish and anti-Italian pronouncements recorded in New York newspapers from the recent past. One wonders if Dominicans writing for mainstream newspapers one hundred years from now will be equally forgetful and, inadvertently echoing the language of McAlary or Giuliani, will defame yet another ethnic group in New York.

Such, then, is the vitiated environment we live in. Ours is an arena plagued by the antipathies resulting from the "various and interfering interests" that are constantly in conflict in society. Our schools, existing within such an environment, reproduce the antipathies in question, which gravely complicates life for students coming from the least empowered sectors of society. The students most often referred to by the authors in this issue of *Punto 7 Review*, coming from the bottom of the social ladder, have to confront conditions which are, as it were, inimical to their best interests. As a result, they have to strive hard to succeed in school. They need, in effect, a far greater commitment, a more ardent devotion, a deeper sense of sacrifice than if they enjoyed a more privileged social position.

To compound the trying nature of the challenge our students have to face, they have to contend with psychological stumbling blocks put in their way by the perception of the sphere of the intellect as the exclusive realm of the affluent. Indeed, overcoming material impediments and mightily pursuing excellence will rarely bring about automatic credibility for the kind of students we generally serve. *Magna* or *summa cum laude* will simply not suffice. As long as present power relations subsist, our students will have to deal with the incredulity of those who — so long accustomed to their privilege that they think it their birthright — do not see it as natural for the less affluent to excel. At all times our students will be called upon to justify themselves and their work even while seeing those socially above them take themselves and their work for granted regardless of merit.

The need to prove that which others can afford to assume is a compulsion deriving from the fact that the majority of the students we come upon in the public school system belong to the margin rather than the core of American society. The politically and culturally marginal lack the option to live unconsciously with respect to their historical experience and their place in society. Fated to live hyperconsciously, in school and elsewhere, in the curriculum and outside of it, they are reminded of their otherness by their position of marginality. Forced by their material conditions to engage constantly in self-scrutiny, the marginal must endure the sense of being watched by the more powerful sectors of society and resign themselves to the burden of representing their community whether or not they desire or accept such an awesome responsibility.

People in the dominant sectors of society enjoy the privilege of individuality. But people at the margins tend to be construed as representative specimens. The tendency to view them as representative units of a collective alterity cancels out their claim to individuality. Thus, a white male of Anglo-Saxon extraction who commits a crime will be spoken about in the press as "a man," while a Dominican male committing the equivalent crime will be described as "a Dominican." In other words, in one case the press concedes to the culprit the condition of individuality — the action rests on his shoulders alone — but in the other it withdraws that condition from the criminal, calling attention to his ethnicity, symbolically attributing his action to the community he represents. The dynamic shows a striking disparity in the reporting of otherwise similar events, but, striking as it might be, the disparity is perfectly consistent with the logic governing the relationship between groups holding unequal positions in society.

Taken together, the writings in this issue of *Punto 7 Review* do not view the experience of the marginal through the prism of tragedy or gloom. There is much to celebrate and still more to hope for. Perhaps the margin houses a truer form of humanity than does the core. Traditional wisdom would have us sustain that carefully weighing the consequences of our actions is essential to the condition that distinguishes us from other animal species. Perhaps, then, the marginality that will cause our students to have to work hard to attain even the most meager of their benefits will help to preserve in them a readiness to examine themselves. In the best of circumstances, self-consciousness entails a measure of humility, which in the present context may serve as a welcome antidote against the destructive potential of arrogance. Those who view power as their birthright often act under the spell of racial, political, cultural or religious arrogance. History is replete with instances in which such arrogance has sponsored holocaust and genocide throughout the globe. Perhaps our students, whose communities have been denied the option of taking themselves and their work for granted, will consequently be in a position to avoid the lethal effects of arrogance even if they hold the center of power in society. It may very well be that they alone, on account of their legacy of hardship, have been rendered humble enough to feel a deep respect for humanity. It may very well be that they, who have had to struggle to establish their claim to humanity, hold the key to the survival of the human family.

Ramona Hernández
Silvio Torres-Saillant

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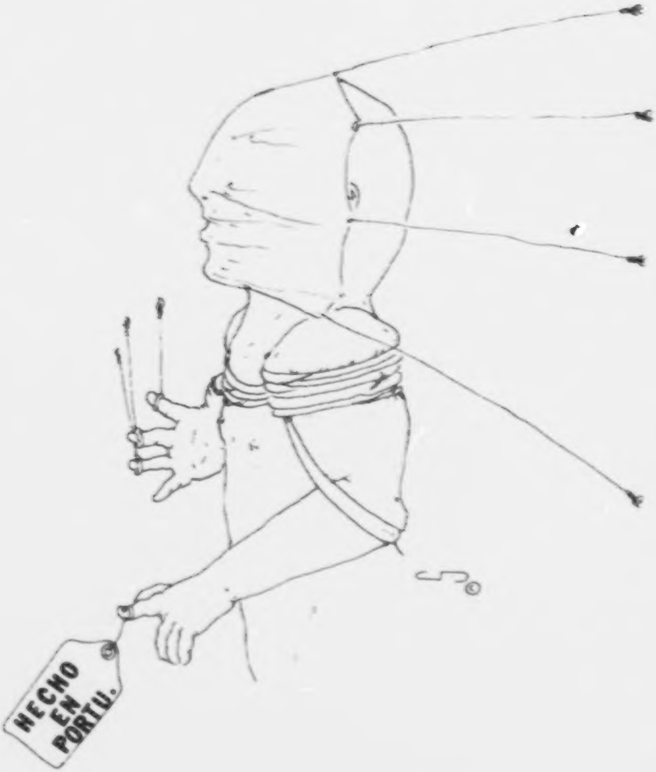
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Small Victories or Big Defeats?

Bruce P. Baskind

On Tuesday, January 27, 1992, President Bush delivered his State of the Union Address. After saying "Kaddish" on the Soviet Union, and declaring the United States the victor in the Cold War, the President announced his domestic policy. The man who had told us in 1988 that he would become "The Education President" told us once again that "we must revolutionize America's schools." What exactly would this revolution consist of? David E. Rosenbaum, in his review of the President's speech appearing in *The Times'* "The Week in Review," (January 26, 1992: 1), writes that the chief of state's "primary idea in education is to help poor people pay private school tuition."

On the surface, the President argues that the "voucher system" would bring the wonders of the competitive marketplace and "the invisible hand" into the education industry. Public schools would have to compete with private and parochial schools for the educational buck. Public schools would have to shape up or ship out. The President assumes that, given the choice, most parents would send their kids to the private and parochial schools. Is he wrong? Beneath the surface, the President may be hoping that a shift to non-public education will create a new generation of Americans, schooled with conservative curricula in institutions where teacher's unions are weak.

Those of us who disagree with the President can probably argue effectively that the "voucher" system would cripple public education as we know it. But it is far more difficult to make the argument that the public schools as we know them are worth saving. Would our young necessarily get a worse education in schools envisioned by the President than they do in our public schools at present?

In the last eight years, we have seen the publication of a number of interesting and popular works which focus on our public high schools. Notable among these are *Horace's Compromise* by Theodore

Sizer (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1984), *The Shopping Mall High School* by Powell, Farrar and Cohen (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1985) and *The World We Made at Hamilton High School* by Gerald Grant (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988). What these works have in common is that while they visit important and fundamental criticism upon our public high schools, they offer tremendous optimism about the future. They suggest various reforms, such as teacher empowerment in the administration of schools and greater school control over curricula (what we usually call school-based management), interdisciplinary study, mastery learning, greater student involvement in their own education, and the creation of schools that stress the "essentials" of education.

Samuel Freeman's *Small Victories: The Real World of a Teacher, Her Students and Their High School*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1990) continues the reflection on our public high schools. *Small Victories*, a book exclusively about an urban public high school, can be grouped with the books mentioned above, though it is considerably different. Unlike the aforementioned texts, *Small Victories* is mainly an emotional story that gives us little evidence that anything of great value can happen in our public high schools. Those who would like to take on George Bush, who would like to say that our public high schools *can* work well to educate our young, given proper support and substantial reform, will find precious little ammunition here. The best defense against the privatization of public schools is to make them work. Yet, Sam Freedman spends 420 pages trying to convince us that dedicated teachers can achieve "small victories." *Of course* they can, but can this ever be enough? Given the assault on public education by the current administration and a declining public confidence in the schools, why should anyone be impressed by a few small victories? Is there any way out of the equation that small victories must necessarily equal "big defeats?"

Sam Freedman was a reporter for *The New York Times* during the 1986-87 school year. Jessica Siegel, who is the focus of the book, was an English teacher at Seward Park High School which is located on Manhattan's Lower Eastside. I was in my fourth year as a Social Studies teacher at Seward. Siegel was enamored with Freedman's work for *The Times* and invited him regularly to speak to her journalism classes. Freedman came to know her as an intelligent, dedicated, idealistic teacher whose concern for her students did not end with the ringing of the bell. As a young reporter, Freedman had covered the education beat in suburban Chicago. Now he saw in Siegel the book he had always wished to write about education. Freedman wrote a detailed proposal for a book, already titled "Small Victories," and submitted it to Harper and Row. With a contract and advance, Freedman left *The Times*. As he explains, "My idea was simple: I would spend the entire 1987-1988 school year at Seward Park — not masquerading as a student, not attempting to teach, but taking notes and conducting interviews as a sort of reporter in residence"(p.6). The result is a story about a year in the life of an inner-city high school. It begins with the June graduation of the class of 1987 and ends with the graduation of the class of 1988, which marks Siegel's decision to leave Seward.

The title is a window on the thesis. I know that Freedman would say that his book has no real thesis, that it is neither polemic nor didactic, that his aim is simply to reveal the world of this school to a wide audience who can come to their own conclusions. The fact is that the concept of small victories influences everything about the book, making it insecure and overcompensatory. How can you sell a book that argues the significance of small victories? Freedman did it with a story that hits mainly in the heart, a narrow focus, a lenient definition of a small victory, and, worst of all, an extremely low expectation of what our public high schools can accomplish. Beyond the suggestion that we need hardworking and caring teachers, there is no sense in this book about how our schools can do a better job of educating.

In his introduction Freedman explains how he came to visit Seward Park "in a notorious immigrant slum on New York City's Lower East Side"(p.1). In fact, the book is replete with references to the "slum school." This portrayal fits Freedman neatly into the historical continuum, that began before Jacob Riis, of writers who have shown the Lower Eastside in negative terms. Seward students and parents who have read the book are furious about this characterization, perhaps no less so than an Irish member of the Knights of Labor or a Jewish woman who led rent strikes would have been if they had read how Jacob Riis portrayed them. Slum is a loaded word with vivid connotations. The point is that the portrayal sets up the story. In the world of the slum, of poverty and ignorance, anything positive could be construed as a small victory. And the story of a good person from the privileged class who sallied forth each day to do her best for the underprivileged cannot fail to tug at the best intentioned heart strings.

We can get a sense of how this works in *Small Victories* if we do a bit of "deconstruction" on a scene from chapter one. Before the first faculty meeting of the 1987-88 school year, Dr. Kriftcher, the principal, confides to Freedman: "You can't look at the big picture. It's too frightening. You have to look at one small picture. And then another. And then another" (p.27). At the meeting Kriftcher tells the teachers about the dire statistics that have arrived with the incoming class of freshmen and sophomores.

> One fourth of all new freshmen...are already seventeen years old....Nearly 20 percent were absent for more than eight weeks of the preceding school year, and half of them are officially considered high risks of dropping out...nearly nine in ten live with parents who do not speak English. Half come from single parent families and 65 per cent from families who are eligible for public assistance (p.26).

What do these statistics mean? Freedman uses them to sustain the image of the slum. I think they indicate a school system that too many students do not like or respect very much. It is a system that seeks to crush their spirit more often than spark their creativity. In *Small Victories*, these numbers are meant to show the inadequacies of the students. But I believe otherwise. I believe the numbers show the inadequacies of the school system.

In an attempt to see the bright side, Kriftcher reads a letter from the Superintendent of Manhattan High Schools "congratulating Seward on its attendance rate, its improved scores on statewide examinations and its comparatively few violent crimes" (p.27). Of course, schools can accomplish this by making a number of students on the long-term absence list into official drop-outs so that their poor attendance will not be counted, by forcing teachers to tailor their teaching for the exams (which are initially graded in-house), and by not reporting incidents of violence.

"Dr. Kriftcher reminds the teachers and counselors that more than 90 per cent of Seward's graduates went to college, trade school or the military, carrying with them more than $100,000 in scholarship money" (p.27). Of course this is an opportunity to suggest some small victories. Maybe this is why there is no mention of what happened to the Seward students who did not graduate or what happened to those who did go on to college or trade school. Did they meet with much success? What proportion of the 90 percent went to college? To the military? We do not find out how these numbers compare to other "slum schools." This kind of analysis would have been too dangerous for Freedman. His burden here is to *create* small victories, not challenge them.

Freedman continues to quote Kriftcher who goes on to tell the faculty, "They need the nurturing we've given in the past...So what do you do? Do you say, 'I could win the NBA if I coached the L.A. Lakers, but I coach the Indiana Whatevers'...The question is: What can you accomplish with the Indiana Whatevers?" (pp.27-28). This meeting was among my fondest memories of Dr. Kriftcher (who is now Superintendent of Brooklyn and Staten Island High Schools). I appreciated this pep talk and respected him for asking us to do our best for the kids. However, I never looked at my students as the Indiana Whatevers. I knew that teaching at Seward meant working with students who might do less homework, know less English and be absent more often than their suburban counterparts. To me the joy of teaching at Seward was in working with students who were usually bright, curious, and had a real "joie de vivre." Still, in the story of *Small Victories*, the faculty meeting is a set-up. The reader is once again primed to see any evidence of success as a near miracle.

It is within this framework that what happens in Chapter Five, "Method Teaching," is made into a small victory. Here, Freedman gives the first glimpse of Siegel at work in the classroom. He cites a lesson that took place in October of 1987. Siegel is introducing a unit on early American literature and is trying to get her students to see how they, as immigrants or the children of immigrants, may have much in common with early American writers. But before Freedman begins his description of the lesson, he tells the reader about all the roadblocks that stand in the way of the lesson's success, indicating that close to "half the class is in danger of failing, and one Chinese boy is running a lucrative football betting pool, collecting $20 bills" (p.121). Now that we know that the teacher is fighting against the odds, she begins her class with the question:

> "Why *did* your family come to America? Manny?
> "It was for a better life."
> "Luis?"
> "To find a better job?"

[Luis is apparently not sure if this is the answer the teacher is looking for.]

> "Mike?"
> "To live with their relatives."
> "They have relatives in other places, too...why here?"
> "Better life."
> "Mary?" She is here today.
> "I'm here alone...I came to study."
> Snickering surrounds her.
> "Steve?"
> "So me and my brothers could have advantages that they never had."

These "pat" answers are never challenged, nor are the students encouraged to dig deeper into the national, local or personal conditions that caused the move. The answers are all tautologies. We can assume that most people who leave their land of origin for another do so because they believe that they will better their conditions. Though Siegel has created the conditions for learning, there is no learning going on. Education happens when students take something new on board or see something differently than they previously had. When Siegel invites her students to go "back to the fifteen hundreds, sixteen hundreds, seventeen hundreds," the assumption that ensues is that conditions which caused migration to America remained constant over three centuries. Similarly, asking them this: "What would be some of the reasons why those people came here?" causes students to generalize about three centuries, people from virtually all over the world, undifferentiated by nation, culture or class. Thus, the students' answers seem predictable:

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> "To get away from their political system"
> "To make money."
> "Is that true?" Jessica asks.
> "They came looking for gold..."

Now the whole class is part of the conspiracy to lump twelve multinational generations under the heading of "they." The students are telling the teacher what she wants to hear, except for the next response.

> "Ottavio?"
> "They came as slaves."
> Jessica crosses her arms and nods. *Only Ottavio could have come up with that answer. For all his bullshit, he really thinks and he really knows his own history.* (Emphasis mine)

Freedman chooses to focus on this answer in order to sell a pedagogical small victory. The reader is asked to buy Ottavio's knowledge of his slave ancestry as a feat. Worse, the grasp of this basic fact is somehow seen as constituting a solid understanding of 300 years of African-American history. That Ottavio alone knew this cannot possibly have been true. Had Freedman interviewed the students in the class, he would have found out that every one of them knew at least this much. The importance of this moment can be sustained only if one has very low expectations of the students' knowledge and ability.

You might try an interesting experiment. Get a few friends together and re-enact any of the scenes from Siegel's classroom that Freedman chooses to describe. You will find that no lesson lasts anywhere near ten minutes, though periods were forty minutes long. In a serious analysis of teaching and learning we might expect a description of an entire lesson. But when you want a story to fly, detailed analysis is like attaching an anchor to a helium balloon. What Freedman fails to report is that up to fifteen minutes of that lesson and all Siegel's lessons were spent having the students copy notes that she wrote on the board. My recollection is that Siegel entered into the most common unconscious conspiracy between teachers and students — to divest the period by taking endless notes that will probably never be looked at again.

Siegel's strategy of getting the students to empathize with the authors or characters in literature by locating analogies to the student's own lives, became her modus operandi. The title of the chapter, "Method Teaching," the chapter in which the teacher's technique is discussed, comes from Freedman's assertion that Siegel's teaching strategy is similar to Stanislavski's school of acting called "The Method." He states that "Jessica taught more by the theatrical principles of Constantin Stanislavski...who held that an actor has to plumb his or her past and there discover an emotional analog to inform the fictive character" (p.124).

According to "The Method," (which was really conceived by Lee Strassberg, based loosely on the ideas of Stanislavski) if an actor's part calls for a good cry, he will do a better job of it by remembering a painful period in his own life. Now the presentation of the cry will seem genuine (even though it is acting) because it is based on true emotion rather than on just the actor's technique. It is far from certain that the actor necessarily understands the character any better as a result. When "The Method" is applied to teaching and learning the problem is that the analogy can be too thin, as it was in the lesson referred to above. Could Siegel's students understand early American authors by knowing that the author, like the students, was a newcomer to America, let alone an America that was far different than the one the students know? The important point here is that Siegel did not create method teaching through a deliberate study of Stanislavski, nor did she ever claim that her strategies were based on Stanislavski. In fact, this strategy is one of the most basic and common ones used in the English Department. But in a book as insecure as his, Freedman found it necessary to construe Seigel as an educational theorist to legitimize his own undertaking.

There were plenty of *real* victories to be found at Seward during the year that Freedman spent there. Had he opened his aperture and examined the pedagogy of a wide range of Siegel's colleagues (there is no detailed description of any other teacher's lessons) he would have found that there were teachers who were really growing, learning, and taking risks in their plans to challenge students to think. He might have discussed the work of Carlton Schade who taught Earth Science. Schade began his course that year by telling his students that the sun revolves around the earth. Schade maintained the lie through the usual plaints of "my eighth grade teacher told me..." or "the textbook says...," fending them off by challenging his students to prove that he was wrong. In a lesson that lasted nearly a week with his class divided in groups, the students learned organically about scientific skepticism, proof, causation, theory building and the purpose of experimentation.

Freedman's readers might have experienced Jay Fleishman's artisanry from his American Government course. For that year Fleishman's students created their own government and learned about the principles, compromises, and concepts that make the creation of government possible. Fleishman put his students into an excellent position to understand the creation of the Constitution of The United States. He was learning literally how to manufacture, in the classroom, deep and meaningful analogies between past and present. It would have been nice if readers of *Small Victories* had met Robert Politzer who taught Biology. During that year, struggling to understand why his students were not fascinated with biology, Politzer had a eureka moment. Teaching Biology, the study of life, with the usual classroom models of hydras or human bodies is ridiculous — ***biology must be taught through life***. Politzer went on to develop a biology course based on the study of live fruit flies.

Jessica Siegel had been at Seward for eight years before Freedman began his year in residence. She had become an institution and rightly so. She was the faculty advisor for the school newspaper, *Seward World*, which was a model of high school students dealing with important social issues such as gentrification, immigration laws and military recruiting. She and I created a course called "Our Neighborhood: The Lower Eastside Experience," which was an interdisciplinary study of the history of immigration to the Lower Eastside. No teacher at Seward liked, cared or tried as hard for the students as she did. She made the calls that got the hot water turned on in a student's apartment. She fought tirelessly to get her students into college. She stayed up most of the night baking her special recipe cookies and brownies so that her students could enjoy them on the last day of classes before Christmas break. No teacher at Seward had more love to give the kids. It is easy to understand how a journalist and a bit of an idealist could be taken with her story. Clearly he could see how marketable the chronicling of her good deeds would be.

Although Freedman does try to switch from micro-focus (on Siegel) to macro-focus (on the Board of Education), the book is really about her. Though a few other teachers and administrators are mentioned, it is almost exclusively in terms of their relationship to her. We are treated to stories about a handful of students, but they are *her* students. The fact is that there is not enough about the problems and possibilities that existed at Seward Park. The reader is told too little about the school's oppressive structure (for students and teachers alike). There is some mention of arbitrary administrators, though because the focus is on Siegel's department, the reader never finds out how common this really was. There is nothing here about the virtual parade of talented teachers who either would not stay or were forced out because at Seward an obedient teacher is worth more than a creative one.

Freedman does mention my election as United Federation of Teachers Chapter Leader, though only as it effected Siegel. What he did not discuss was that my landslide victory was the result of a grassroots movement that called for "Dignity and Democracy." This movement said a great deal about conditions at the school and why so many of my colleagues had become bitter. Freedman's focus on Siegel made discussion of this nearly impossible because she decided not to jump on the reform bandwagon.

A school like Seward with three thousand students, a separate annex building, and three hundred staff members is a highly complicated social organism. With his decision to focus on Siegel and to stay only for a year, Freedman was in no position to produce a deep analysis of the school or even to show change over time. It has been a running joke at Seward to mention all the things that happened that year that don't appear in the book. This is why to people who experienced that year in the life of Seward, *Small Victories* tastes so much like instant coffee.

Perhaps the narrow focus accounts for some of the book's insecurity. For during his year at Seward, Freedman found that he had compiled too few small victories. He knew, however, that a mass of them was necessary to create a significant story. For example, on page 186 Freedman tells how the chairman of the English Department made Siegel the "buddy-teacher" for a newcomer, Steve Anderson, at the beginning of the 1986-87 school year: "Steve called Jessica every single night for months, with desperate pleas for aid in writing lessons and tips on buying grade books." It was actually Freedman who was desperate: to paint Siegel as a mentor, giving her another small victory, especially in light of Siegel's decision to leave teaching, which created a major problem for the desirable coherence of his narrative. He shapes the story so as to give the clear impression that Siegel played a key role in Anderson's development. Freedman was thus able to leave the reader with the feeling that despite her own decision to make no more small victories, she would leave Seward with a pedagogical legacy — her pupil, Steve Anderson.

But the reporter from *The Times* never confirmed this story with Anderson, though they had many conversations. Had Freedman cared to check his facts, Anderson would have told him that this story was a "laughable exaggeration." Also, Anderson began his career at Seward at the start of the 1984-85 school year, not 1986-87. Was this just a small error or did Freedman rearrange the facts to give the impression that this small victory happened only one year before, not two?

Two of the most important small victories in the book concern Siegel's students Vinnie Mickles and Sammy Rian. Both these fine young men gained acceptance to S.U.N.Y. New Paltz as a result of Siegel's tireless efforts on their behalf. But Rian had graduated before Freedman's stay and Mickles graduated a full two years before Sam became "a reporter in residence." Flashbacks and history can be important ways for an author to develop necessary background for his characters, but Freedman's use of small victories from prior years suggests that in his mind the material he had gathered during his lone year was just not strong enough.

A major theme that runs through the book concerns the breakup of my friendship with Siegel. Freedman promised me that this would not be treated in the book. He never asked for my side of the story. That the story was not properly investigated is only part of the problem. More importantly, treatment of the personal problems between us trivializes the book by focusing on emotion and personalities rather than on serious analysis of teaching and learning. I strongly believe that this story line is so prominent in the book precisely because Freedman did not have enough meat. It is in effect literary "Hamburger Helper."

To say that *Small Victories* is small value for the education literature dollar is not to say that it is no value at all. There are four important points made in this book that the author should be thanked for passing on to the public. First, he does a good job of attacking the myth that Chinese students are educationally high achievers while their Latin counterparts are not. By treating exceptional Latin students like Salome Junco and Alex Iteralde with so much respect and by showing the problems that plague many Chinese students such as gangs and poverty, Freedman confronts powerful stereotypes.

Second, Freedman literally destroys the myth of the idyllic public schools of the past. He shows that drop-out rates were probably higher before 1950 than they are today. He reminds the reader that the American high school is a recent invention and that before 1950, working class young could easily find jobs in industry rather than bother with school. His fourth chapter, "Built to Fail," offers some interesting analysis of what has happened to New York City as its industrial base has eroded.

Third, Freedman demonstrates through personal observation how terribly the Board of Education treats its teachers. He accompanied me on one of my trips to the Board of Examiners and witnessed how callously and disrespectfully I was treated by petty bureaucrats (pp.35-38).

Fourth, he shows how New York State funding formulas lead to an under-funding of New York City public schools relative to other school districts in the state, causing the city to spend significantly less per pupil. This causes serious problems, particularly large class sizes or higher student-teacher ratios as Chapter Four makes clear.

Having conceded these virtues to *Small Victories*, however, it remains true that those who are interested in reading about our public high schools would do better by turning their attention to more serious studies. In *The Shopping Mall High School*, Powell, et al, show that the modern public high school is much like a shopping mall: "There is something here for everyone." Like the shopping mall, schools try to be as inclusive as possible — they both do their best to attract and retain as many shoppers, or students, as they can. Schools do this by creating as many different curricula, electives, tracks, and options as they can. The result is that "the more curricula variety it (the school) develops, the less able it is to forge any workable consensus about what educational experiences are of most worth or what kind of mastery is possible or appropriate for all." The high school has become a sort of diarrhetic institution that lacks a sense of mission, for "[h]igh schools take few stands on what is educationally or morally important" because to do so might interfere with their ability to attract a wide variety of students — if enrollments decrease, so too will funding and jobs (p.3). In this powerful argument that schools must stand for something that is educationally valid, the authors understand that there is talent within the nation's faculty, but that it "usually aims at further accommodations — at making an inclusive and diverse student population comfortable, willing to stay and willing to behave. Innovation is rarely directed at challenging existing preferences in favor of making learning itself and learning for everyone the highest institutional priority" (p.6). Can our public schools do better? These critics say yes, but not until the schools decide what they are about.

The World We Created at Hamilton High, by Gerald Grant, is a fascinating study that shows how much we can learn about a school when careful, intelligent social science methods are used and the study takes place over an extended period of time. Part One is a history of Hamilton High School from 1953-1985. In Part Two, Grant describes what is possibly the most innovative approach to educational reform that you can read. In 1984, Grant (who was not a member of the faculty) began teaching a course in "Urban Anthropology" at Hamilton High. His students, who reflected the diversity of the school, were taught how to do research and analyze their school. One student wrote a paper about the evolution of the school's curriculum over the past two decades and another wrote an oral history of three teachers' experiences in the school. After two years, the research done by Grant and his students was given over to the faculty for their examination. Grant then decided to "initiate a process of reflection among teachers and staff about ways to improve their school" (p. 235). Grant explains that at this point, the faculty and staff had three choices:

> The first was to withdraw from the effort to create good public schools... A second option would have been to allow the minimalist bureaucratic model of public schooling to run to its individualistic limits — to let the public schools operate as contract learning systems and acknowledge that coexistence is all we can legitimately hope for. The third option was the one these teachers chose, that of regenerating a dialogue about the intellectual and moral aims of a public school in a democratic society (p.254).

What developed was a process in which the teachers and staff created the reforms that they, as the people who knew their school best, wanted. Grant is correct to point out that this is most unusual. Ordinarily reforms are handed down to teachers and typically fail because the teachers had no part in creating them and therefore do not believe in them.

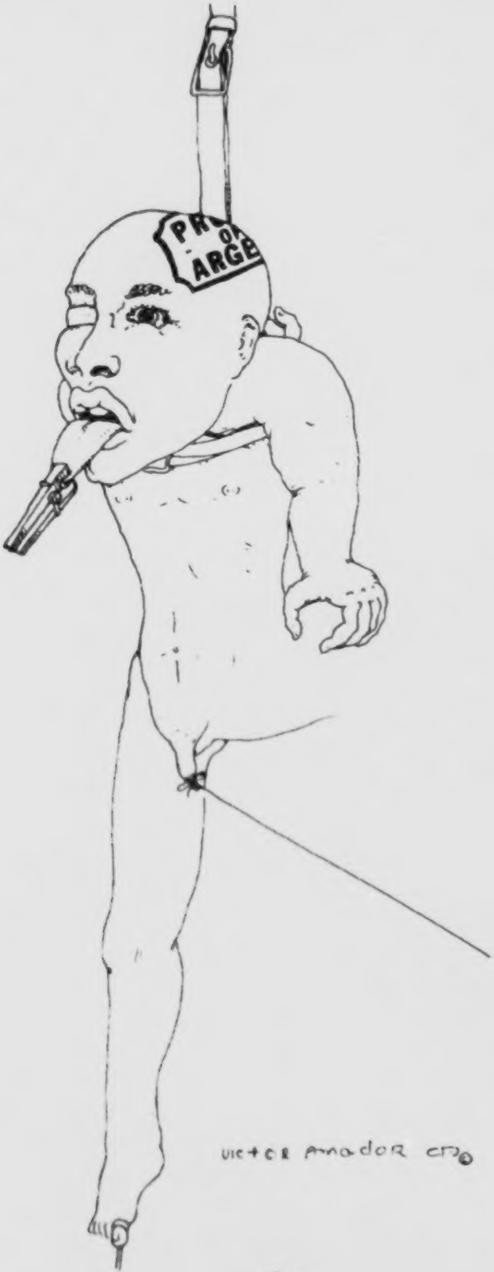
No one has done more in the education reform movement in the last ten years than Theodore Sizer. As Chairman of the Coalition of Essential Schools he has been instrumental in creating over one hundred schools all over the country that stress the "essentials" of education in schools where teachers and students have great decision-making power. These schools operate on the philosophy that "less is more," that is, the quality and depth of what students learn is more important than the quantity. Sizer's *Horace's Compromise* is a powerful attack on our public school system. Sizer and Freedman examined similar public high schools, but what Freedman construed as a parade of small victories, Sizer saw as mediocrity. *Horace's Compromise* is an interesting analysis of how well-intentioned teachers such as Horace too often settle for mediocrity. Critical as he is of teachers, Sizer however places tremendous faith in them: "Without good teachers, sensibly deployed, schooling is barely worth the effort" (p.4). Sizer argues that schools must be organized in such a way as to maximize the creativity and humanity of teachers and students: "Inspiration, hunger: these are the qualities that drive good schools. The best we educational planners can do is create the conditions for them to flourish and then get out of their way" (p. 221).

Sizer's more recent *Horace's School: Redesigning The American High School* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1992) describes the process of a large public high school restructuring into small "houses" in order to create the conditions for greater contact between teacher and student, interdisciplinary teaching (with great emphasis on the humanities), and making teachers the driving force behind curriculum reform. Large schools such as Horace's or Seward are far too big, impersonal, and alienating. Sizer includes tables on the school's budget and its innovative design for teacher and student time during the school day.

During the Spring 1992 term, a team of teachers, students, a guidance counselor, and an administrator at Seward Park High School planned for our own restructuring. In the Fall of 1992 a prototype house made up of about 450 students and 20 teachers will begin the process of breaking Seward into five such houses. Our plan was heavily influenced by Sizer. During fifty or more hours of planning, *Small Victories*, a book about our own school, was never mentioned.

It is our hope to create the conditions that will encourage teachers to be the best scholars, the best pedagogues we can be. As we learn to deal with smaller groups of students, we will not have to pursue our desire to nurture our students at the expense of challenging them. We will be able to give them confidence and expect excellence because we will work with them far more intimately than we have ever had the chance to do. I believe that we will create the conditions that will make teaching the kind of challenging, learning, and rewarding experience that will attract the brightest college graduates.

The fact is that there is a growing literature and an agenda for change in our schools that is exciting and promising. Unfortunately, Sam Freedman never got so much as a whiff of it. None of the books I have mentioned even appear in his bibliography. At the present time, our public schools are under an unprecedented and powerful attack. The stakes are high as the future of education in this country hangs in the balance. It is an attack that can only be countered by a new commitment to excellence and innovation. *Small Victories* is no answer.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My English

Julia Alvarez

MAMI AND PAPI USED TO SPEAK IN ENGLISH when they had a secret they wanted to keep from us children. We lived then in the Dominican Republic, and the family as a whole spoke only Spanish at home, until my sisters and I started school at Carol Morgan, and we became a bilingual family. Spanish had its many tongues as well. There was the *castellano* of Padre Joaquín from Spain whose lisp we all loved to imitate. Then the educated *español* my parents' families spoke, aunts and uncles who were always correcting us children, for we spent most of the day with the maids and so had picked up their "bad Spanish." *Campesinas*, theirs was a lilting animated *campuno*, s's swallowed, endings chopped off, funny turns of phrases my aunts would have us repeat so they could laugh. This *campuno* was my true mother tongue, not the Spanish of Calderón de la Barca or Cervantes or even Neruda, but of Chucha and Iluminada and Gladys and Ursulina from Huncalito and Licey and Boca de Yuma and San Juan de la Maguana. Those women yakked as they cooked. They story-told, they gossiped, they prayed, they sang — boleros, merengues, mangulinas, mariachis, salves. Theirs were the voices that belonged to the rain and the wind and the teeny teeny stars even a small child could blot out with her thumb.

Besides all these versions of Spanish, every once in a while, another strange tongue emerged from my Papi's mouth or my Mami's lips. What I first recognized was not a language but a tone of voice, serious, urgent, something important and top secret being said, some uncle in trouble, someone divorcing, someone dead. *Say it in English so the children won't understand.* I would listen straining to understand, thinking that this was not a different language but just another and harder version of Spanish. *Say it in English so the children won't understand.* From the beginning English was the sound of worry and secrets, the sound of being left out.

I could make no sense of this "harder Spanish" and so I tried by other means to find out what was going on. I knew my mother's face by heart. When the little lines on the corners of her eyes crinkled, she was amused. When her nostrils flared and she bit her lips, she was trying hard not to laugh. She held her head down, eyes glancing up, when she thought someone was lying. Whenever she spoke that gibberish English, I translated the general content by watching the Spanish expressions on her face.

Soon at the Carol Morgan School, I began to learn more English. That is, when I had stopped gawking. The teacher and some of the American children had the strangest coloration: light hair, light eyes, light skin, as if Ursulina had soaked them in bleach too long. *To'deteñío.* I did have some blonde cousins, but they had such tanned skin, and as they grew older, their hair darkened, so their earlier paleness seemed a phase of their acquiring normal color. Just as strange was the little girl in my reader who had *a cat* and *a dog*, that looked just like *un gatito y un perrito*. Her Mami was *Mother* and her Papi *Father*. Why have a whole new language for school and for books with a teacher who could speak it teaching you double the amount of words you really needed?

Butter, butter, butter, butter. All day, one English word that had particularly struck me would go round and round in my mouth and weave through all the Spanish in my head until by the end of the day, the word did sound like just another Spanish word. And so I would say, "Mami, please pass *la mantequilla*." She would scowl and say in English, "I'm sorry, I don't know what *mantequilla* is. But would you be needing some butter on your bread?"

Why my parents didn't first educate us in our native language by enrolling us in a Dominican school, I don't know. Part of it was that Mami's family had a tradition of sending the boys to the States to boarding school and college, and she had been one of the first girls to be allowed to join her brothers. At Abbot Academy, whose school song was our lullaby as babies ("Although Columbus and Cabot never heard of Abbot, it's quite the place for you and me"), she had become quite Americanized. It was very important, she kept saying, that we learn our English. Always she used the possessive pronoun: your English, an inheritance we had come into and must wisely use. Unfortunately, my English became all mixed up with our Spanish.

Mixup, or what's now called Spanglish, was the language we spoke for several years. There wasn't a sentence that wasn't colonized by an English word. At school, a Spanish word would suddenly slide into my English like someone butting into line. Mrs. Buchanan, whose face also I was learning to read as minutely as my mother's, would scowl but no smile played on her lips. Her pale skin made her strange countenance hard to read, so that I often misjudged how much I could get away with. Whenever I made a mistake, Mrs. Buchanan would shake her head slowly, "In English, Jew-LEE-AH, there's no such word as *columpio*. Do you mean a *swing?*"

I would bow my head, embarrassed, humiliated by the smiles and snickers of the American children around me. I grew insecure about Spanish. My native tongue was not quite as good as English, as if words like *columpio* were illegal immigrants trying to cross a border into another language. But Mrs. Buchanan's discerning grammar-and-vocabulary-patrol ears could tell and send them back.

Soon, I was talking up an English storm. "Did you eat English parrot?" my grandfather asked one Sunday. I had just enlisted yet one more patient servant to listen to my rendition of *Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers* at breakneck pace. "Huh?" I asked impolitely in English, putting him in his place. *Cat got your tongue? No big deal*, I could quip. *So there! Take that! Holy Toledo!* (Mrs. Buchanan's favorite "curse word.") *Go jump in the lake! Really dumb. Golly. Gosh.* Slang, little tricks, cliches, sayings, hot shot language that our teacher called ponderously: idiomatic expressions. Riddles, jokes, puns, conundrums, little exchanges. *What is yellow and goes click-click? Why did the chicken cross the street? See you later, Alligator.* How wonderful to call someone an alligator and not be scolded for being disrespectful. In fact, they were supposed to say back, *In a while, Crocodile.*

There was also a neat little trick I wanted to try on an English speaking adult at home. I had learned it from Elizabeth, my smart alecky friend in fourth grade whom I alternately worshipped and resented. I'd ask her a question that required an explanation, and she'd answer, "Because..." "Elizabeth, how come you didn't go to Issa's birthday party?" "Because..." "Why didn't you put your name in your reader?" "Because..." I thought that such a cool way to get around having to come up with answers. So, I practiced saying it under my breath, planning for the day I could use it on an unsuspecting English-speaking adult.

One Sunday at our extended family dinner, my grandfather sat down at the children's table to chat with us. He was famous, in fact, for how he could carry on adult conversations with his grandchildren. He always spoke to us in English so that we could practice speaking it out of the classroom. He was a Cornell man, a United Nations representative from our country. He gave speeches in English. Perfect English, my mother's phrase. That Sunday, he asked me a question. I can't even remember what it was because I wasn't really listening but lying in wait for my chance. "Because," I answered him. Papito waited a second for the rest of my sentence and then gave me a thumbnail grammar lesson, "*Because* has to be followed by a clause."

"Why's that?" I asked, nonplussed.

"Because," he winked, "Just because."

A beginning wordsmith, I had so much left to learn; sometimes it was disheartening. Once Tio Gus, the family intellectual, put a tiny grain of salt on my grandparents' big dining table during Sunday dinner. He said, "Imagine this whole table is the human brain. Then this teensy grain is all we ever use of our intelligence!" His face kept getting redder, his voice louder and louder as he enumerated geniuses who had perhaps used two grains, maybe three. Einstein, Michelangelo, Da Vinci, Beethoven. "It's been scientifically proven," Tio Gus argued when his older brother told him to stop exaggerating. We children believed him. It was the kind of impossible fact we thrived on, proving as it did that the world out there was not drastically different from the one we were making up in our heads.

Later, driving home, Mami said to Papi that Manuel was right, their younger brother Gus loved to exaggerate. "You have to take everything he says with a grain of salt," she concluded. I thought she was still referring to Tio Gus' demonstration, and I tried to puzzle out what she was saying. Finally, I asked what she meant. "Taking what someone says with a grain of salt is an idiomatic expression in English," she explained. It was pure voodoo, that is what it was — what later I learned poetry could also do: a grain of salt could both symbolize the human brain and a condiment for human nonsense.

And it could be itself too, a grain of salt to flavor a bland plate of American food.

When I was ten, we emigrated to New York. How astonishing, a country where everyone spoke English! These people must be smarter, I thought. Maids, waiters, taxi drivers, doormen, bums on the street, garbagemen, all spoke this difficult language. It took some time before I understood that Americans were not necessarily a smarter, superior race. It was as natural for them to learn their mother tongue as it was for a little Dominican baby to learn Spanish. It came with "mother's milk," my mother explained, and for a while I thought a mother tongue was a mother tongue because you got it from your mother's breast, along with nutrients and vitamins.

Soon it wasn't so strange that everyone was speaking in English instead of Spanish. I learned not to hear it as English, but as sense. I no longer strained to understand, I understood. I relaxed in this second language. Only when someone with a heavy Southern or English accent spoke in a movie or at church when the priest droned his sermon — only then did I experience that little catch of anxiety. I worried that I would not be able to understand, that I wouldn't be able to "keep up" with the voice speaking in this acquired language. I would be like those people from the Bible we had studied in religion class at the foot of an enormous tower that looked just like the skyscrapers all around me. They had been punished for their pride by being made to speak some slightly different version of the same language so that they didn't understand what anyone was saying.

But at the foot of those towering New York skyscrapers, I began to understand more and more — not less and less — English. In sixth grade, I had one of the first of a lucky line of great English teachers who began to nurture a love of the language, a love that had been there since a childhood of listening closely to words. Sister Zoe did not make our class interminably diagram sentences from a workbook or learn a catechism of grammar rules. Instead, she asked us to write little stories imagining we were snowflakes, birds, pianos, a stone in the pavement, a star in the sky. What would it feel like to be a flower with roots in the ground? If the clouds could talk, what would they say? She had an expressive, dreamy look that was accentuated by her face being framed in a wimple. Supposing, just supposing... My mind would take off, soaring into possibilities, a flower with roots, a star in the sky, a cloud full of sad sad tears, a piano crying out each time its back was tapped, music only to our ears.

Sister Zoe stood at the chalkboard. Her chalk was always snapping in two because she wrote with so much energy, her whole habit shaking with the swing of her arm, her hand tap tap tapping on the board. "Here's a simple sentence: *the snow fell*," Sister Zoe pointed with her chalk, her eyebrows lifted, her wimple poked up. Sometimes I could see little bits of grey hair disclosed by her wobbly habit. "But watch what happens if we put an adverb at the beginning and an indirect object at the end: *Gently the snow fell on the bare hills*. . . ." I thought about the snow. I saw how it might fall on the hills, tapping lightly on the bare branches of trees. Softly it would fall on the cold cold fields. On toys children had left out in the cold, and on cars and on little birds and on people out late walking on the streets. Sister Zoe filled the chalkboard with snowy print, on and on, handling and shaping and moving the language, scribbling all over the board until English, those little bricks of meaning, those little fixed units and counters, became a charged, fluid mass that carried me in its great fluent waves, rolling and moving onward, to deposit me on the shores of the only homeland. I was no longer a foreigner with no ground to stand on. I had landed in language.

I had come into my English.

Bilingual Sestina

Julia Alvarez

Some things I have to say aren't getting said
in this snowy, blonde, blue eyed, gum chewing English,
dawn's early light sifting through *persianas* closed
the night before by dark-skinned girls whose words
evoke *colores, sonidos, sueños* in *nombres*
from that first world I can't translate from Spanish.

Gladys, Rosario, Altagracia — the sounds of Spanish
wash over me like warm island waters as I say
your soothing names: a child again learning the *nombres*
of things you point to in the world before English
turned *sol, tierra, cielo, luna* to vocabulary words —
sun, earth, sky, moon — language closed

like the touch-sensitive *morivivir* whose leaves closed
when we kids poked them, astonished, even Spanish
failed us back then realizing how frail a word
is when faced with the thing it names. How say
anything and hope to summon up in Spanish or English
the full blown genii from the bottled *nombre*?

Ay Gladys, how bring you back with a two-syllable *nombre*
to open up again the house of slatted windows closed
since childhood, where *palabras* left behind for English
stand dusty and awkward in neglected Spanish.
Rosario, muse of *el patio*, sing in me and through me say
that world again, begin first with those first words

you put in my mouth as you pointed to the world —
not Adam, not God, but a country girl numbering
the stars, the blades of grass, warming the sun by saying

ya 'manece as the dawn's light fell through the closed
ventanas from the gardens where you sang in Spanish,
Estas son las mañanitas, and listening, in bed, no English

yet in my head to confuse me with translations, no English
doubling the world with synonyms, no dizzying array of words,
— the world was simple and intact in Spanish
awash with *colores, luz, sueños*, as if the *nombres*
were the outer skin of things, as if words were so close
to the world one left a mist of breath on things by saying

their names, an intimacy I now yearn for in English —
words so close to what I mean that I almost hear the Spanish
heart beating, beating inside what I say *en inglés*.

Exile, 1960, Ciudad Trujillo, New York City

The night we fled the country, Papi,
you told me we were going to the beach,
hurried me to get dressed along with the others,
while posted at a window, you looked out,

at a curfew-darkened Ciudad Trujillo,
speaking in worried whispers to your brothers,
which car to take, who'd be willing to drive it,
what explanation to give should we be discovered...

"on the way to the beach," you added, eying me.
The uncles fell in, chuckling phony chuckles,
"What a good time she'll have learning to swim!"
Back in my sisters' room Mami was packing

a hurried bag, allowing one toy apiece,
her red eyes belieing her explanation:
of "a week at the beach so Papi can get some rest."
She dressed us in our best dresses, party shoes.

Something was off, I knew, but I was young,
and unsure how the world went when things were "on."
So as we quietly filed out of the house
we wouldn't see again for another decade,

I let myself lie back in the deep waters,
my arms out like Jesus' on His cross,
and instead of sinking down as I'd always done,
magically, that night, I could stay up,

floating out, past the driveway, past the gates
in the black Ford, Uncle grim at the wheel,

winding through back roads, stroke by difficult stroke,
out on the highway, heading toward the coast,

past the beach's entrance towards the airport,
my sisters crying when we missed the turn
to the family beach house, Mami consoling,
there was a better surprise in store for us!

She couldn't tell, though, until...until we were there.
But I had already swum ahead and guessed
some loss much larger than I understood,
more danger than the deep end of the pool.

At the dark, deserted airport we waited;
all night in a fitful sleep, I swam.
At dawn the plane arrived...and as we climbed,
Papi, you turned, your eyes scanned the horizon

as if you were trying to sight a distant swimmer,
your hand frantically waving her back in,
for you knew as we stepped inside the cabin
that a part of both of us had been set adrift.

Weeks later, wandering our new city, hand in hand,
you tried to explain the wonders: escalators
as moving belts; elevators: pulleys and ropes;
blonde hair and blue eyes: a genetic code.

We stopped before a summery display window
at Macy's, The World's Largest Department Store,
to admire a family outfitted for the beach:
the handsome father, slim and sure of himself,

so unlike you, Papi, with your thick mustache,
your three-piece suit, your fedora hat, your accent.
And by his side a girl who looked like Heidi
in my storybook waded in colored plastic.

We stood awhile, marveling at America,
both of us trying hard to feel luckier
than we felt, both of us pointing out
the beach pails, the shovels, the sandcastles

no wave would ever topple, the red and blue boats.
And when we backed away, we saw our reflections
superimposed, big-eyed, dressed too formally
with all due respect as visitors to this country,

or like, Papi, two swimmers, looking down
at the quiet surface of our island waters,
seeing their faces right before plunging in,
eager, afraid, unsure still of the outcome.

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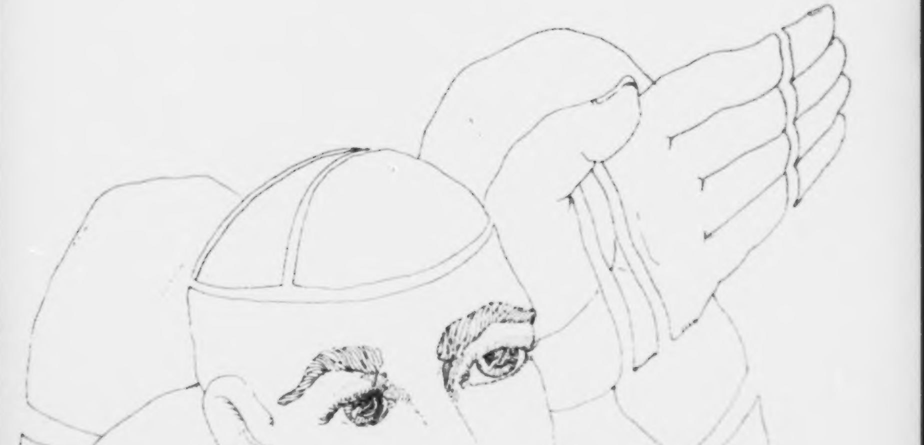
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The Pitfalls of Comparing Marginal Groups

Ramona Hernández

ANY STUDY BY A MEMBER of the dominant ethnic group in society containing a comparison of two minority immigrant communities is likely to be approached cautiously especially by the minority readers whose communities are represented in the study. Questions will naturally arise regarding the precise purpose that moved the author to undertake the comparison, the validity of that methodological approach, and the possible consequences of the study for any one or both of the communities under perusal. Those are, at any rate, some of the questions that come up in connection with *Through the Eyes of the Needle* (1986) by Roger D. Waldinger. The book analyzes two new groups of immigrants, the Chinese and the Dominicans, who have entered as petty bourgeois in the garment industry of New York.

In Waldinger's view, during the last two decades industrial production in the city of New York has undergone significant structural changes which have allowed the integration of new immigrants as owners into the productive system. In analyzing the structural conditions, the author begins with a historical overview to point out that New York has always been an important manufacturing center, housing the largest production of garment in the nation. From the early 20s to the early 60s, the production of garment was controlled by Jews and Italians. After 1965, however, new immigrants from two distant parts of the world, Chinese and Dominicans, became visibly involved in this industry. The author indicates that while in 1960 there were only eight Chinese garment production firms in New York, by 1985 this number had risen to 480 (p. 117). Waldinger does not offer any data concerning the growth in Dominican ownership because, in his own words, "the trend data in Hispanic business ownership are not available" (p.116). Given the lack of data on Hispanic businesses, Waldinger needs to depend, for his analysis of Dominican ownership, mostly on his own analytical resources.

Waldinger proceeds to point out that Chinese and Dominicans became involved in this business as owners due to at least two important developments. On the one hand, the original occupants of this space in the industry, Jews and Italians, already had stepped out of the business through retirement and upward mobility. Their children, having already acquired the appropriate tools to enter white collar positions, did not choose to continue their parents' line of business. On the other hand, garment production itself changed considerably in New York, utilizing low-cost inputs and intensive labor rather than intensive capital. More importantly, production leaned toward the creation of non-standardized and fashionable merchandise, factors which in general reduced the cost of production, facilitating thereby the entrance of the less prosperous groups into this industry.

Waldinger states that his major concern in the book is to illustrate the penetration of these immigrants into the capitalist productive world. Yet, in reading the book one finds that both immigrant groups are constantly compared and contrasted with the result that Dominicans turn out to be less equipped and prepared than Chinese to succeed in the business.

Waldinger declares that "the opportunity for immigrant enterprises stems from the social and economic structure of the host society in which the immigrants settle" and that "the spirit of immigrant capitalism in the garment industry is not an import but rather an adaptation to the environment that Chinese and Dominican immigrants encounter in New York" (p.13, 179). Yet, his comparison reveals a formula for success in business based upon the background and aspirations of the immigrants in question. The focus on background and aspirations leads Waldinger to the examination of a number of cultural attributes which, on closer inspection, moves his scrutiny outside his intended analysis of structures. The attributes found in the immigrant's "background" include a series of human capital characteristics such as education, a prior exposure to a competitive economy, and previous contact with urban settings as well as with a business atmosphere. "Aspirations," on the other hand, refers to the immigrant's own perception regarding the prospects of his/her stay in the United States (chapter 8).

For Waldinger both groups share a few characteristics which, in one way or another, have enabled them to enter the garment industry as petty proprietors. In his view, both groups are recognized as hard workers who could withstand extreme working conditions. The analysis of his sample population also revealed to him that these workers had a good disposition for starting their own business with little investment and running incredible risks. During the interviewing process Waldinger was able to confirm, for instance, that Dominicans work an average of "51.4 hours and 5.5 days a week" while the Chinese work "51.8 hours and 5.8 days a week" (p. 184). Both groups share a similar inclination to hard work.

However, when comparing the degrees of success achieved by the two groups, Waldinger finds the Chinese to be ahead of Dominicans since Chinese firms were considerably larger and had a much longer period of establishment. Why, one might ask, are Chinese more successful than Dominicans in the business if they both are immigrants and share the same willingness to work hard and succeed? Our reading indicates that Waldinger does not offer a direct answer to this important question. Rather, he creates a puzzle by discussing, rejecting, and commenting on the theories of Weber and others who, in one way or another, have dealt with the issue of success and failure in the capitalist world, and positing *en passant* his own ideas, not in the form of clear statements, but as mere hypothetical suggestions dropped casually here and there in his discussion. However, put simply, Waldinger's collected suggestions in the book boil down to this: Chinese immigrants are more successful than Dominicans because the former possess the elements required for attaining success and the latter simply lack them. This is affirmed by Waldinger in passages such as the one in which he claims that "business relevant attributes are present among the Chinese garment capitalists more than among their Dominican counterparts" (p. 180).

The business attributes alluded to by Waldinger refer specifically to a number of qualifications ranging from socio-economic considerations to overall rates of literacy and modes of settlements of both immigrant groups. Thus Waldinger points out that

> comparisons of Hong Kong and Taiwan with the Dominican Republic show higher levels of urbanization,

> of employment in non-agricultural pursuits, and of literacy among Chinese than among the Dominicans. Moreover, levels of prior professional and managerial experience were far higher among those Chinese immigrating to the United States between 1970 and 1979 than among those Dominicans who arrived during the same period (p. 181).

Similarly, the decision to remain in the United States or return home is qualified by Waldinger as a variable which not only influences the rate of success of these immigrants in the garment industry but also reflect the perception of the entire community to which these immigrants belong. Thus, Waldinger finds that Chinese success in the garment industry is related to the community's firm decision to settle permanently in the United States. Dominicans, however, want to return home and their community is classified by Waldinger as transient:

> While the Chinese community *by all accounts* [emphasis added] is a settlement of permanent immigrants... Considerably fewer Dominicans seem ready to abandon their homeland, and after a stay in the United States that has averaged almost 17 years, more than half [of his sample] still planned to return at some future time....(p. 181-2).
>
> Indeed, more than half of the Dominicans came with the intention of returning home....This unsettled, almost transient nature of the [Dominican] owners' status strengthens their orientation toward their homeland (p. 177).

As one could see, Waldinger's formula for explaining the success of the Chinese consists of the combination of socio-economic and structural factors exhibited by the receiving society plus the group's own cultural and attitudinal inputs. Concerning Dominicans, Waldinger's formula reveals that the structural factors are blocked by the group's little formal schooling, rural background, little exposure to an industrial environment, and their transient mentality. Thus, the functionality of the socio-economic structures alluded to by Waldinger so emphatically as a source capable of fostering an acquired behavior is annulled by the inputs of the group, whose cultural qualities turn out to be strong enough to prevail over those structures and to determine the path of this group in the society as a whole.

The question of these qualities is so important to Waldinger that he finds it necessary to insist that although

> Chinese and Dominicans might share a common situation-immigrants segregated at the low end of the labor market with few outlets for upward mobility other than business...[they]...would still define that situation quite distinctively, should they also differ in background and aspirations. (p. 176)

Thus, whatever the reality may be, it seems that Dominicans would be less able to judge, qualify, or measure it properly, given their less favorable background and aspirations. The Chinese are much better equipped, in his view, and do judge their surroundings and their condition properly. For instance, a Dominican interviewed by Waldinger about his business speaks with undue conviction and enthusiasm: "The only opportunity is to work....Those who don't get ahead, do not want to work. Those who want to work can get ahead. In this country, working leads to success" (p. 170). His Chinese counterpart, however, more skeptically but also more coherently with reality, claims: "No matter what kind of job it is, the Chinese have to work twice as hard as the Americans in order to get ahead in the United States" (p. 173), or "Compared to the Americans, it is harder. There is the language problem plus the racial problem" (p. 172).

In his analysis Waldinger ostensibly rejects Weber's ideas in relation to the cultural propensity of Protestants to succeed in capitalist Western countries. He argues that it is not that cultural analyses are wrong, but he finds them incomplete. Cultural analyses lack an understanding of how the host environment could foster a given behavior among immigrants. They fail to account for the role of structural elements found in the host society (such as a demand and an appropriate niche for garment production in New York city) which are beyond immigrants' control.

Waldinger's combination of cultural, psychological and structural elements to explain entrepreneurship among immigrants and their success in business has been praised by Ivan Light in a 1988 book review. However, contrary to what Light finds, we believe that Waldinger's formula consists of a series of elements which does not yield a new explanation. Waldinger remains within the Weberian line of argument in so far as he not only correlates cultural attributes with success but he also utilizes cultural behavior as indicator of ability. Structures tend to lose their meaning in Waldinger's analysis since people are seen as actors whose particular situations are defined by their background and aspirations (p. 176). More importantly, his analysis reflects that structures are free entities, without any relationship with a given historical, social formation.

Waldinger's analysis of American society is not presented as a representative of a system, that is, a totality, but rather as a series of pieces, disconnected and independent, a realm in which one's attitudinal and cultural attributes operate freely, not mediated by social categories such as race, class, or gender. His non-holistic perspective overlooks the importance of inequality in American society, and construes social mobility as the product of one's particular background and outlook on life, or as he puts it, as the outcome of "...the actor's point of view and the factors that might condition his or her perspective" (p. 176).

Cultural differences among ethnic communities should not mean more than different socialization processes. One should not magnify their meaning. Yet, historically some societies have used these differences to discriminate against specific groups. In capitalist societies the tendency to discriminate against specific groups is constantly present. Production requires an abundance of workers, many of whom will not be absorbed into the process of production, but will be on call, ready to sell themselves to employers when needed. Producers are then free to discriminate among workers and create competition. Waldinger himself illustrates this dynamic by pointing out that although none of the white employers interviewed by him employed Chinese workers "many of the white ethnic employers... had sought to recruit Chinese workers ...[since]Chinese workers are viewed favorably and native employers ascribe to them a higher level of discipline and productivity than they find in the general labor force" (p. 186).

In Waldinger's analysis, society's responsibility towards immigrants seems to disappear. We get a view of immigrants acting independently in a society which they could conquer provided that they are well equipped with a particular background and certain aspirations. The contradictions and the specific restrictions imposed by capitalist production on the various sectors of society do not seem to weigh too heavily in this study. Waldinger prefers to analyze individual groups of immigrants and society as isolated entities.

The dichotomy between individuals and society permeates Waldinger's methodological approach to his subject matter. He favors a middle-range analysis of empirical data, and this forces him to disregard an abstract analytical framework, which in this case might be a more adequate tool to study Dominican and Chinese owners. He argues, for instance, that Dominicans possess a transient mentality because they migrate in cadena (p.183). Yet, what could be perceived as a particular characteristic of Dominican migrants is simply a mode of migration used by any group that migrates under the Family Re-unification policy introduced in the 1965 U.S. immigration law. Under the Family Re-unification policy, immigrants, especially minors and spouses as well as other immediate family members, could be claimed by relatives already living in the United States.

On the issues of aspiration and success, Waldinger believes that the transient mentality of Dominicans prevents them from having the success of the Chinese in the garment business. For Dominicans "the goal of returning home is simply postponed, not abandoned, and consequently migrants may not be as deliberate as settlers in acquiring the relevant skills that are needed to get ahead" (p. 184), hence remaining behind in the business.

Waldinger acknowledges the kinship between his particular line of reasoning and the argument advanced before him by Michael Piore (1979), for whom a major factor affecting minority immigrants in the United States (with the exception of Cubans, of course) was their transient mentality and their perceiving themselves as transitory workers or "birds of passage." Piore went on to argue that mental transience was part of a "culture of poverty" which could be transmitted to the immigrants' children, creating thereby a vicious cycle of unstable people and, therefore, undesirable workers.

In 1979 Piore was committed to explaining why American socioeconomic structures had kept Puerto Ricans and other minorities away from ever conquering the so-called "American Dream." The fact that Puerto Ricans and other minorities remained, decade after decade, in the least prosperous sectors of society, had to be explained somehow. Most Puerto Ricans were urban and educated and came from an industrialized economy. If they remained behind, in Piore's view, it had to be because they had a transient mentality that did not allow them to settle and succeed. Similarly, in 1986 Waldinger retakes Piore's position by characterizing Dominicans as mentally transient, explaining, therefore, these immigrants' apparent inability to succeed in the "Promised Land."

Waldinger, following Piore's reasoning, characterizes Dominicans as transient, as people who want to go home and whose close ties with their homeland prevent them from settling permanently in the United States. Yet, what Piore and Waldinger have viewed as an obstacle for social mobility, that is, a close relationship with one's native land, did not prevent most early Europeans from moving up in the social ladder in American society. At their arrival, if one thinks of the description author William Alfred (1972) gives of his Irish grandmother, many seemed as if they were never going to unpack their European bags, expecting, as they were, to go back home.

For Dominicans, or any other group, it is quite normal that on the early stage of their immigrant experience they should want to return to their homeland, the place where they internalized a specific mode of socialization. Also, transience constitutes only an initial and passing stage within any large migratory process. It is typical particularly of those contingents for whom migration has been the result of a forced decision rather than the product of a willful and calculated act. And this transitional stage is one which even white European immigrants have had to undergo in their North American abode.

We would agree with Waldinger that there are many Dominicans who do not see their migratory process to the United States as final and who may go back home, no matter what, even if just to be buried there, near their family, as many frequently say. But, we would venture to argue that if twenty five years of residency in the United States have left many Dominicans undecided about returning home or remaining in the receiving society, it is not because they have been unable to overcome their mental transience. Rather they have found it hard to adapt to the precarious life awaiting the majority of them in the United States.

What Waldinger perceives as mental transience could very well be no more than a strong reaction of these people to the deplorable living conditions which await them in New York, where they usually end up in ghettoes and slums, lacking the most fundamental facilities to live decently and productively. The typical Dominican community in New York is not Chinatown.[1] It is far from being a tourist attraction, a zone rich in exotic foods and enchanting sites, a therapeutic station for white Americans wishing to quench their thirst for the culturally distant. It is a place where much sadder realities prevail. Piles of garbage, dirty streets, lack of schools and health facilities, inadequate housing, corrupt cops, high unemployment rates, are all signs that indicate clearly that Dominicans inherit abandoned areas at the margins of the larger American society. In such locations it would be reasonable not to wish to become permanent.

When it comes to education and Dominicans, American social scientists often arrive at different conclusions, depending, it seems, on whom they interview. In comparing Dominican with Chinese owners, Waldinger finds that during the entire interviewing process his Dominican informants never brought up the issue of education as a possibility for their children to move up socially in this society. The Chinese, on the contrary, emphatically declared that education was the only vehicle for their children to move up in American society.

Yet, as recently as 1987, Patricia Pessar, in another study on Dominican immigrants, found that when it came to improving their social condition, Dominican women invariably chose education over any other variable, including labor organizing.[2] These dissimilar results on the same issue, demonstrate that one should think twice before making generalizations on the basis of a particular finding from a given interview with a selective sample. Especially, if those generalizations could lead to such latent consequences as the creation of undesirable stereotypes concerning the groups under pesusal. It is always a bit risky to suggest that a given finding reflects the mentality or outlook of an entire community.

Indeed, besides the world of work, such overall characterizations can penetrate many sectors of American society, including educational institutions. For instance, in the New York public school system, especially at the college level, one often hears how Oriental students are better prepared than Latino students and how well the former do academically as compared with the latter. In schools where this tendency is found, the issue should not be only the academic discrepancy between these two groups of students but also the question of why attitudes towards a particular ethnic group not too long ago rejected in the United States, seems to have changed favorably. Recent history may perhaps provide us with an answer. The fact is that after World War II some Oriental regions have either changed their socio-economic position in the world-market, taking a leading role, in the case of Japan, or have proved to be fearfully competitive, such as Taiwan and Hong Kong, or have remained a political challenge to the United States and the new world order, as in the case of China. Conversely, Latin American nations, especially those of the Caribbean Basin, have not experienced any rise in international prestige. Increases in production in these countries have not elevated them to a leading or challenging position in the world-market. Therein may lie the considerably more favorable view of some Orientals prevalent in many American schools today.

The practice of making comparisons between Dominicans and other ethnic groups has become common among some social scientists studying Dominican migration to the United States and Puerto Rico (see for instance, Hendricks 1974; Gurak 1981 and 1987; Gurak & Kritz 1982, 1984, and 1988; Sassen-Koob 1979; Duany 1992; Chavez 1991). In this comparative mode, Dominicans have come out both winners and losers. With Hendricks and Chavez, for instance, Dominican immigrants showed better prospects than Puerto Ricans. With Waldinger and in most of Gurak's works, Dominicans are less equipped than either Chinese or Colombians to make it in American society.

Whence this insistence in finding one marginal group better than another? We do acknowledge that there exist points of convergence between Dominicans and other minorities residing in the United States. But at this point in time, when minority communities

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are under political and economic attack, it is hard to see the benefit of any study set on pin-pointing what may be perceived as defects or faults among Dominicans or any other group.

Waldinger finds that Dominican owners are less successful than their Chinese counterparts because they fail to fulfill the requirements of his model of analysis. But one could argue that his model does not correspond to the realities of both communities. One might say, for instance, that the problem lies in how Waldinger has compared both groups of immigrants. His conclusions are based on a comparative analysis of two communities which are hardly comparable within the parameters chosen by him. He fails to see that success among Chinese garment producers may be connected to the large capital investments which have entered the Chinese community during the last years. Heavy amounts of capital from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and other places have been invested in the Chinese community in most economic areas, including banking, real estate, restaurants, and manufacturing (Kuo 1977). This is not the case with the Dominican community. Here politicians from the Dominican Republic come every election year to solicit funds rather than to bring investments. More importantly, he fails to see that, whether or not a migratory movement is dominated either by a "brain drain" or by unskilled workers, the degree of success or failure of that group in the receiving society is intrinsically connected to how that group is *perceived and received* in the host society (see History Task Force, Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños 1979; Portes & Borocz 1991).

Third World immigrants should be perceived within a broader perspective, one in which immigrants are not understood solely as groups with peculiar cultural values and distinctive degrees of human capital but also as contingents whose specific social classes and racial characteristics largely shape the kind of reception they are accorded by the American society. Any comparative analysis of Dominicans and Chinese, or any other combination of minority communities, should go beyond highlighting what may be perceived as vices or virtues among the people examined. Similarly, rather than extending the practice of comparing one minority group against another, it would be more productive, we think, to view both groups against the dominant culture in this country. This would shed light on and aid in the understanding of these immigrants' place in society. This would also help to prevent the use of stereotypes, ward off ethnocentric image-making, and avoid fostering resentments and divisions among minorities in the United States.

NOTES

1. We do not mean to imply here that the Chinese community is exempt from the scarcity associated with being an ethnic minority in the U.S. The reference means, simply, that white New Yorkers would not normally think of Dominican neighborhoods as sites to visit in the way they do of Chinatown.
2. See also Eugenia George, 1991, who found that both groups of Dominicans, migrants and non-migrants, perceive education as a vehicle to move up socially.

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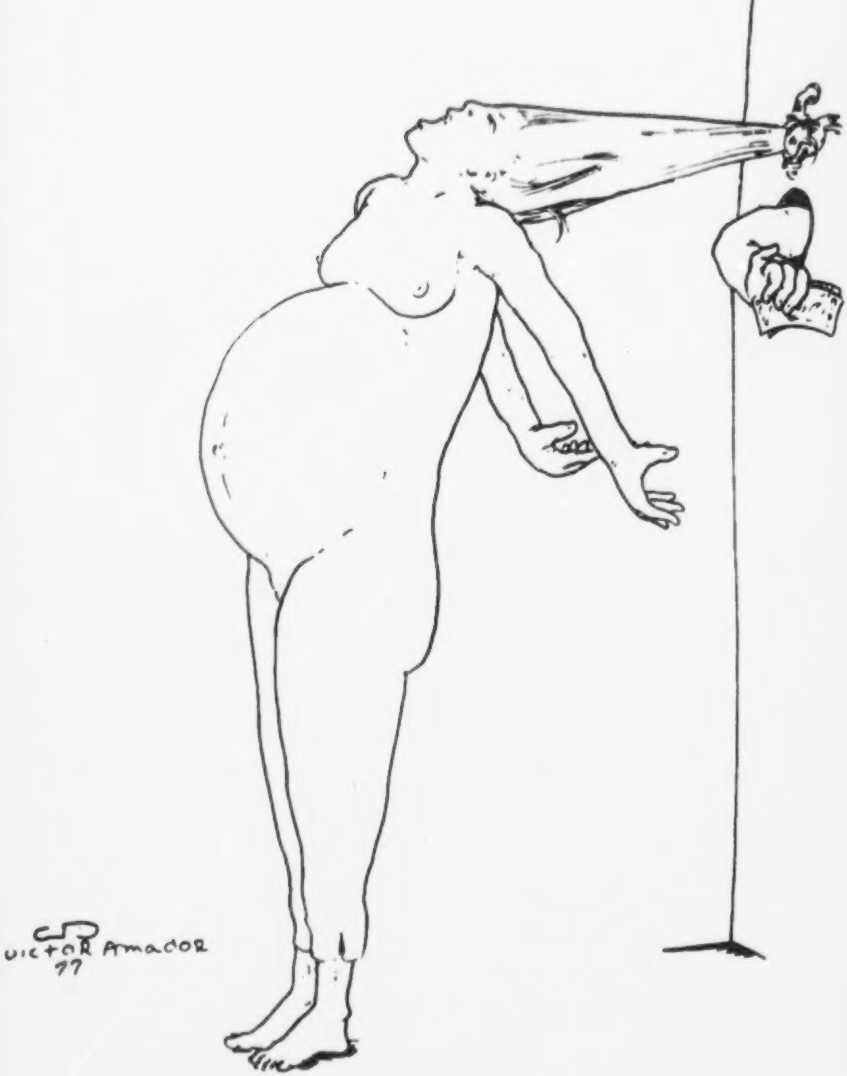
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Dominicans in Higher Education

Hanan C. Orna

STATISTICS ON DOMINICANS

WHILE THERE ARE NO EXACT FIGURES on how many Dominican students attend institutions of higher education in the U.S., the office of Institutional Research and Analysis at the City University of New York (CUNY) has estimated that there are approximately 9000 Dominican undergraduates in the CUNY system. This estimate, obtained in a 1989 survey, represents about 5% of the total undergraduate population. More accurate figures will be available in 1992, as the CUNY admission applications will be restructured to reflect exact numbers (CUNY, ORI, 1989).

Because data on Hispanics as one group in higher education are readily available and must include Dominicans, this paper will deal with the plight of Hispanics in higher education in general, and with how Dominicans fare in the CUNY system in particular.

THE PROBLEMS TO BE SOLVED

Hispanic students must solve many problems before entering colleges and universities in the United States including difficulties with the English language. Additionally, a good number of them may live in neighborhoods that are drug ridden and often lacking in good role models. Although 97% of Dominicans are said to be bilingual (CUNY, 1989), this does not necessarily make their transition from high school to college easier than for other Hispanic groups, for whom the percentages of bilingualism are lower. The reason why the transition remains difficult is that Dominican students come from families usually besieged by economic hardship. The students must be helped to become familiar with services that are available for college students, as they may be eligible to receive grants, student loans, or work study benefits. Instead of submitting applications to several colleges, which would enhance their chances of admission, prospective students may apply to only one college to reduce costs, or because they are not aware of the application process. And in cases where they have low GPAs, they may be fearful of not being accepted if they applied to certain schools. Dominican students may not be aware of fee waivers that apply to the application process, and, because of the culture which may view some aspects of the application process as infringing on the privacy of the family, they may omit vital information which may undermine their eligibility for needed funds or services once they are accepted.

Approximately 75% of the Dominican parents surveyed did not finish high school. As a result, they may not encourage their children to go to college. Parents who are unfamiliar with college may find it difficult to urge their children to enter a school system whose workings they do not know. The family is often concerned about the expenses of a college education. Existing figures show that 66% of Dominican households have annual incomes below $14,000, while only 35% of other Hispanics fall in that bracket (CUNY, 1989). The problems are exacerbated by unemployment, and, besides the regular family obligations, there will, of course, be concerns once the student loans come due. If the students can solve some of these problems, meet the admissions criteria, apply, and get accepted in a B.A. or A.A. program, they must then cope with supporting themselves, often for many years. For a variety of reasons, they usually cannot attend college on a full time basis.

PREPARATION AND ENROLLMENT

Despite the aforementioned problems, Dominican students do enroll into institutions of higher education. In the CUNY system, 49% of those who enter go to B.A. programs, with 51% going to A.A. programs. But, despite their extremely high level of bilingualism, 23% of all Dominican students enter CUNY in special programs, as compared with 16% of other Hispanics (1980 OIRA Freshman Cohort). This suggests a need for better preparation in high school in order to meet the criteria for the rigorous courses they will face in college.

Closer attention must also be paid to exactly how the bilingual ability of these students is measured and why they still need special programs. Although there may not be funds available, the high school curriculum could be structured so that the students benefit more from what is already being offered, especially in bilingual education. Successful bilingual programs should be studied, particularly those in areas where students are not normally expected to succeed but do so because of how the program is implemented. Because many students may be registered as having an adequate command of English, some of their problems may be overlooked. Scoring within a certain percentile alone is not proof of the absence of difficulties with English, which become evident when students require remedial work upon entering college.

The issue of tracking should also be addressed, as linguistic problems are often confused with inability to learn. The fact that so many high school graduates choose to enter terminal A.A. programs may reflect the way they are made to view themselves. It may be that because of the tracking process or low grades — actually results of some of the circumstances mentioned earlier — some students become wary of entering B.A. programs for fear that they may not be able to maintain themselves once admitted. It is vital for these students to be encouraged to enter four year programs and to understand the benefits of degrees beyond the A.A.

Teachers, counselors, and administrators must help these students not only to be better prepared when they enter, but also to conquer the fear of "difficult" majors. They are underrepresented across college disciplines such as math, science and engineering (Carrasquillo, 1991). Most of the entering Dominican students in the CUNY colleges are female, and it is well known that traditionally, females have tended to be socialized to accept that math is too hard for them to handle. In their case, then, it is especially important to combat this fear.

THE NEED FOR MORE STUDENTS AND FUNDS

It is often lamented that Hispanics are underrepresented in the nation's colleges. In 1976, 36% of Hispanic students entered institutions of higher learning. However, that number dropped to 29% in 1986 (Carrasquillo, 1986). Some of the factors that contribute to the decline in admissions or to the attrition rate may be attributed to the conservatism of the period. In this conservative climate, Hispanic students suffered the effects of cutbacks in programs, services, and jobs which would have prepared them to enter college. It is lamentable that the universities' responses only aggravated conditions by making it difficult for many students to enter. As of 1985, public colleges and universities in nearly 30 states had tightened their undergraduate admissions criteria, and the SAT scores required were often higher than before. Efforts must be made by Hispanics to demand services that will help them overcome the obstacles that keep them from entering the nation's colleges. The federal government may be short of funds, yet money becomes available when something is deemed a national emergency. The education of our youngsters is urgent and must become a national priority.

The CUNY system advocates easier admission standards but has often been a revolving door for the Hispanic student. Open admission does not necessarily mean automatic graduation. Students must be able to maintain themselves reasonably and must do acceptable work to be able to graduate from community or four-year colleges. They must, furthermore, persist in the face of the aforementioned difficulties until the time of graduation.

Studies show that as of 1985 community colleges have gotten less than their fair share of campus-based aid (Grubb and Tuma, 1991). These studies show that students in private schools were most likely to receive aid — 84% compared with 52% of students in vocational technical schools, and 28% of those in public community colleges. The increasing default rate on student loans is said to have contributed to what is currently perceived as the reticence of some lenders. Students in community colleges have lower incomes and show more need than students in senior colleges, but this does not necessarily mean that they hold the majority of defaulted loans.

Dominican students normally come from backgrounds of economic scarcity. Dominican households tend to be larger than the average Hispanic household. One fifth of the households surveyed have five or more members (CUNY, 1989). Even when a student is single or does not have children of his/her own, the pressure to contribute to the household may mean dropping out of school or going on welfare to help sustain the family. Among those surveyed 36% of

Dominican households have at least one member who receives public assistance (CUNY, 1986). The sheer pressure of work and home life may thus be a reason why Hispanics account for a very small proportion of full time students enrolled in higher education. Furthermore the worsening economic situation may put the coveted college degree on the back burner for quite a while to come, if not forever.

COLLEGE NEEDS

Given the above impediments, Dominican students may not always be prepared to handle the demands of an institution of higher education, which presents them with forms of study that are unfamiliar to them and requires them to engage in a great deal of independent work. Despite being classified as bilingual, the Dominicans surveyed feel more comfortable in Spanish than in English (OIRA, 1980), so efforts must be made to provide them with guidance and support services to enhance their linguistic resources and achieve full bilinguality. In some cases, these students may lack such basic information as the availability of tutors, typing services on campus, and basic skills workshops. Aiding them to obtain such information may enable them to form their own network of support.

With the removal of ethnic studies and special support of academic programs, Hispanic students are going through a difficult time. For example, 6 out of 17 Puerto Rican Studies programs and departments have been closed, and those that are in existence lack the proper faculty and administrative personnel (Carrasquillo, 1990). Carrasquillo reports that by 1985 only 1.4% of all faculty in U.S. higher education were Hispanic, including faculty in bilingual education. She states that by 1985 there were only 6 Hispanic presidents in four-year colleges, and 20 presidents of two-year colleges on the U.S. mainland. Her study shows that by 1986, 29% of CUNY's Puerto Rican teaching force was located at Hostos Community College. The scarcity of Hispanics in higher education may limit the opportunities for Hispanic students to establish contact with educators of their own ethnicity, which may make it less likely for them to conceive of higher education as a career option.

Studies reflect that the presence of Hispanics in graduate schools is marginal. At CUNY, for example, only 8.2% of the graduate students in 1986 were Hispanic. The American Council on Education states that despite underrepresentation, Hispanics have registered increases in the number of degrees earned between 1986 and 1987 by women (Carrasquillo, 1989).

The problem of finding work, even with a degree in hand, must then be faced in a society that makes life difficult for Hispanics to get an education and to be adequately supported while they study. Dominicans are especially vulnerable, and ways of networking for jobs, putting together professional resumes, and counseling on subjects such as the interview process and prevailing salaries in their field could be stepped up before graduation. While most students will not be new to the job market, it is important that they get as much occupational training as possible so that upon graduation they can enter the increasingly competitive job market with confidence.

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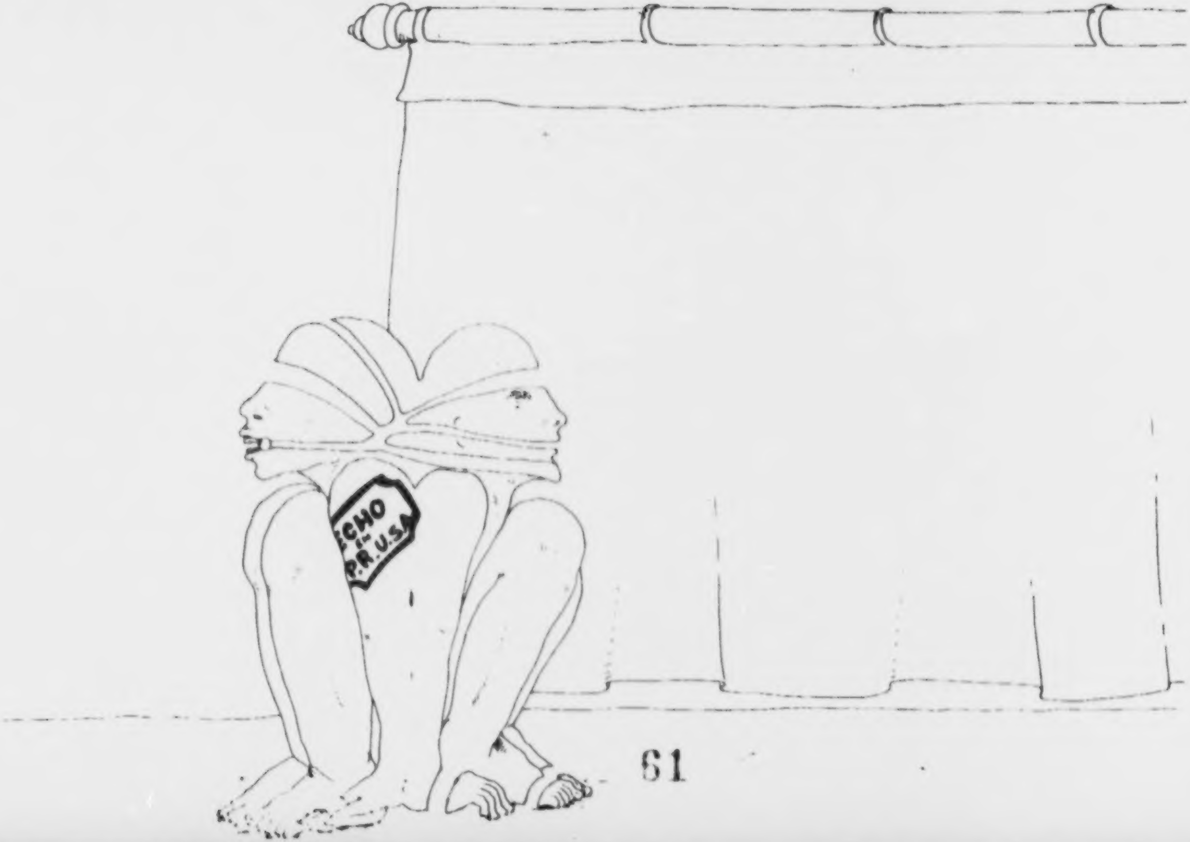
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Dominican High School Students: Hopes and Problems

Leona Marsh

INTRODUCTION

As far back as 1981, *The New York Times* reported that the Dominican community was one of the fastest growing in New York City. It is also, however, one of the least understood or studied. Due to increased migration from the Dominican Republic, students from that country constitute one of the largest ethnic groups in the school system, not only in Washington Heights where they are clearly a majority with 80% of the school population (Linares 1989), but in many other districts and schools throughout the city. As recent arrivals, Dominican students are labeled "Limited English Proficient" (LEP) and usually placed either in bilingual programs or in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes designed to serve their special linguistic needs.

School related experiences of Dominican youths are worth examining because it is in the schools that youngsters usually have their earliest socializing experiences with native speakers in the receiving country. Such contacts may provide positive or negative educational and cultural experiences which could affect their perceptions about their role in this society. Often, the kinds of interpersonal relations within the high school setting and its environs greatly affect students' ability to acquire academic English, to finish high school, and to go on to college. In some situations it is not the difficulties presented by the target language but the milieu, e.g., the existence of violence, inadequate guidance and support systems, and lack of understanding of the immigrant experience in a particular setting that militate against academic success. An analysis of Dominican students and schooling might contribute to a greater understanding of why they are among those accounting for the highest drop-out rate in New York City.

In this article, which is based on a pilot study of Dominican high school students, I point out some of the issues that come to bear on the educational experiences of Dominican immigrant children who have been labeled LEP in New York City in a specific public high school in order to appreciate several significant problems as perceived by them. Since the sample in this study is small, it would be incorrect to come to any categorical conclusions about Dominican students' academic performance based on this material. When the pilot project is expanded to include a much larger sample it is hoped that some clear-cut recommendations of benefit to Dominican students can be made.

In order to begin to understand and evaluate Dominican students'concerns and possible reasons for failure, I analyzed a questionnaire completed by 34 Dominican LEP students in a NewYork City high school bilingual program. The aim of the questionnaire (See appendix) and follow-up interviews with students was to obtain information regarding their perceptions of several problems existing in the school as well as to begin to appreciate the many obstacles facing them.

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Results of the questionnaire revealed several trends: Forty percent of those who participated in the survey have been in New York City for at least one year. Thirty-four percent of the students live with their mother who is the head of the household. The others live with either father, both parents, an aunt, stepfather, grandmother, brothers or alone.

Forty-one percent of the students work. Among these, one student works as many as 56 hours while others worked 49, 40, 28, 20, and 10-hour weeks. Among those who did not work, more than half were looking for jobs.

All but two students answered that they would like more contact with native-speaking students while all but eight answered that they had at least minimal contact with native English speakers, mostly on the job. Those who responded negatively to the question of contact explained that their interaction with native speakers had been in the context of fights and altercations and that they were reluctant to make friends outside of their group. Those who responded that they had had opportunities to speak with native-speakers considered greetings as conversational opportunities.

When asked to specify their main problem in learning English, 38% (13/34) indicated pronunciation while 29% (10/34) indicated writing. The rest specified grammar and conversation.

When asked to select two things in school they would change if given the chance (See question 9), six students used the word "racism" in comments such as: "Because there is racism among the Hispanics themselves and I wish there weren't"; "You see racism when you talk to people and I would like everyone to talk to each other with good feelings and I wish that they weren't racist so that everyone would feel equal"; "I would like more unity between the students of ESL and the mainstream because in this way there wouldn't be so much racism," and "Students in the bilingual program should have more rights because sometimes the Hispanics are discriminated against."

Five of the students expressed a desire for more contact with native English-speaking students in comments such as: "[We should] do things so that the mainstream and bilingual students would be more connected. That is, don't always have us in two groups, and try to have more communication and classes together"; "Change the system that divides the Hispanics and Americans"; "Teachers should treat all students as equals"; "Have classes so that the bilingual and mainstream students can be together"; and "The security people should treat the Hispanics the same way as they treat the other students."

Ten students indicated that they wanted more English in the way of classes and more opportunities to use and learn English. Five of these stipulated that the bilingual character of the program should be kept intact: "Give more classes in English but don't change the bilingual system"; "My main problem is to enter a university so I want to learn more English in order to get new friends because it's important in this country."

Four students were dissatisfied with their teachers and/or the program: "I'd like to change the teacher because I don't understand her"; "Some teachers are not capable"; "I would change two or three teachers who don't teach well", "The teachers should have a better understanding of the students", and "Change the way of teaching and give more important courses during the school year." (When asked to explain what they meant by "important" courses they said they needed more courses such as science and math instead of art, health, or gym).

Four students complained that because they have to work they were not able to keep up with their classwork: "It's difficult for students to get to school on time because they work and so they can't take advantage of their classes"; "I would like to find a better job so I can pass my classes more easily"; and "Students who work should be able to get a letter from their bosses saying that they work so that teachers would assign them less homework and extra classwork."

Two students complained about the school administration: "[We should have] better organization in the bilingual program. Lots of students fill up the office and don't let the people there work," and "The administration of this school doesn't do enough for the bilingual students."

DISCUSSION

Upon analysis, some general observations arose from the answers to the nine questions presented. Responses indicated that Dominican students perceive themselves as participants of a system that keeps them isolated from the mainstream and which has been unwilling or unable to meet their special needs. On the other hand, one finds a genuine yearning on the part of Dominican students to become more integrated in school life, especially in relation to English as a second language.

Affective factors in second language learning have been cited as crucial to students' progress. According to Schumann (1975), some students' linguistic development is hampered by their social and psychological distancing from target language speakers. Another writer (Eisenstein 1982) found that some speakers, who were marginalized, began to denigrate their own linguistic behavior. That is, upon listening to taped conversations, students attributed positive personal characteristics to individuals who spoke standard English without noticeable accents and less favorable characteristics to those who spoke with accents, much as they themselves did. In addition, they stated that they would prefer to befriend the former group of speakers rather than the latter.

The fact that students perceive their pronunciation as the main obstacle to learning English could be related to their sense of isolation. That is, they believe that if they could somehow sound more like native speakers, they would have more "American" (sic) friends and be more accepted both in school and in the rest of society. However, the ability to sound like a native speaker is a direct result of the time one has been practicing the second language or the age at which one began to learn L2, and is relatively unimportant as long as the accent does not impede communication. Furthermore, it is not the accent, per se, that explains their position (several of their teachers have recognizable foreign accents). But an accent does single one out as being an immigrant in an environment that denigrates immigrants and prevents them from gaining minimal control over their lives, in this case vis-à-vis schooling.

Another issue that is of importance to students is the lack of well-planned and effective multicultural studies and activities in schools. This lack tends to keep students ignorant of each other's contributions, thereby lessening respect for one another. Interviews with students revealed their desire to get to know other students personally in order to lessen the tensions that lead to violence and to have opportunities for enhanced communicative experiences. While individual teachers have integrated their classes for specific lessons by inviting non-bilingual students to participate in bilingual ESL classes, this is not done throughout the school on a planned basis.

Although, it is a state mandate for public schools to have a multicultural component, because many of the activities are hastily pulled together and superficial in nature, they do not incorporate important aspects of a particular culture, and, therefore, cannot always provide intellectual enrichment. Furthermore, meaningful activities can only take place when qualified people, both those who are a part of the culture and others who have experience in it, participate in these efforts.

A third issue relates to students having to work. The fact that 71% of the students who responded to the questionnaire live with one adult, alone, or with siblings, attests to the growing phenomenon of students working, usually at superexploitative jobs, to maintain themselves or help to maintain the household while in school. Requests for an alternative school-day on the questionnaire is based on students' recognition of their inability to juggle both work and school satisfactorily.

CONCLUSIONS

This pilot study demonstrates that Dominican and other LEP students more often than not face isolation, the threat of violence, and major economic responsibilities as they attempt to become educated in the public schools.

In my capacity as teacher and as researcher in the Dominican community, I have found that students looked forward to the learning activities I initiated which brought them together with mainstream students based on cooperative learning techniques because they consisted of meaningful communicative experiences. That is, students responded favorably to linguistic experiences in socially meaningful contexts that provided an environment of trust and mutual respect.

Activities that incorporate the bilingual LEP (both Dominican and non-Dominican) students into the everyday life and decision-making aspects of the school should not be arbitrarily and haphazardly arranged. Furthermore, personnel who have no special interest or background in the community or in work of this kind should not be given this assignment if there are those available who have the commitment. The consistent inclusion of LEP students in all aspects of school life should be policy. Indeed, such a policy could lead the way for more student participation on a school-wide basis.

These gains cannot be made without the participation of Dominican parents, activists in the community, teachers, and other educators who are concerned about Dominican students' schooling and about the high drop-out rate of Hispanic youths. It is they who will put forward the necessary reforms as part of an effort to empowering the Dominican community.

Some specific reforms might include more participation by LEP personnel, the inclusion of LEP students in school planning, training of and participation in school life of Dominican parents, including collaboration with African-American parents, more individual attention to working students' problems (i.e. alternative programming to facilitate work schedule), more participation of bilingual teachers who are active in the Dominican community in multicultural work to coordinate activities geared to breaking down the isolation of Dominican students.

In order for these and other reforms to actually be put into practice, communication between community organizations, research institutions, individual teachers, professors, and educators who feel an obligation to this community needs to go on in an effort to define goals and strategies.

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APPENDIX

1. How long have you been in this country?
2. How long have you been in this school?
3. Who do you live with?
4. Do you work? If so, what days? How many hours a day?
5. Do you have opportunities to speak English outside of classes? If you do, where and with whom?
6. Would you like to meet with native-speaking English speakers?
7. Do you have friends outside of the bilingual program?
8. What are your main problems in learning English? (Be specific)
9. If you could change any two things in this school, what would you change? (Be specific and explain why)

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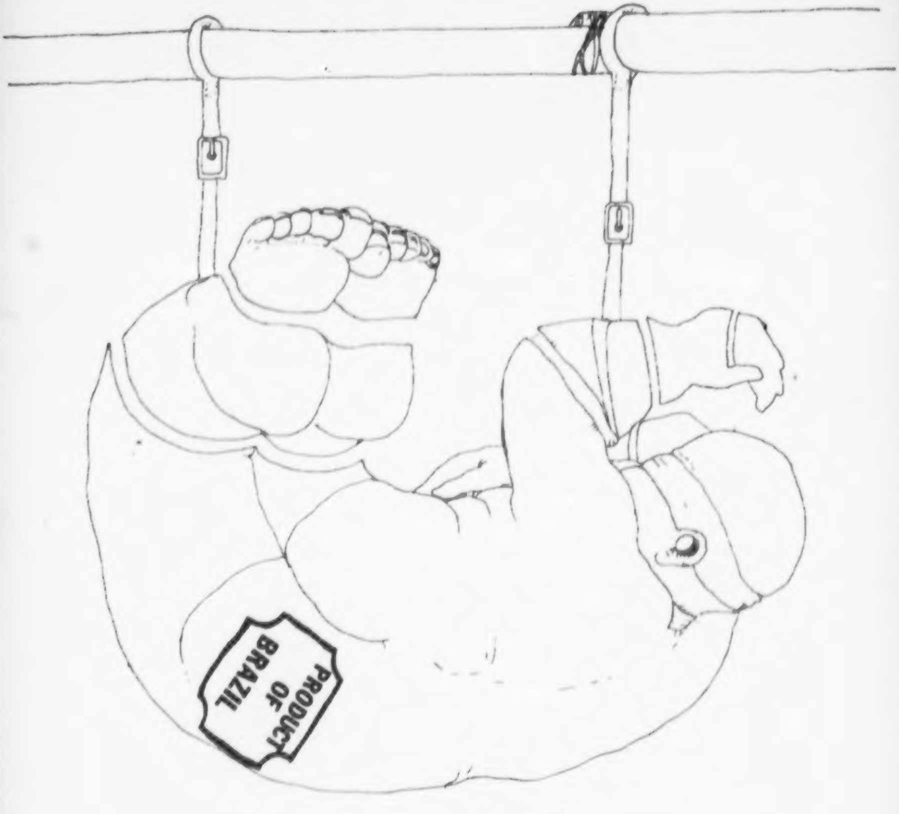
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Confessions of a Full Professor

Alfredo Villanueva-Collado

(What Did You Say Your Name Was?)

The sons
and daughters
of men
and angels
tread the earth
in awesome shapes,
their bodies
reflecting sunlight,
the morning air
around their loins.

(Now You Can Do Whatever You Want...)

When I grow up, yeah, yeah,
I wanna be an acrobat
going my contrary way
walking between two poles
where no high wire extends
intent on the indefinite line
avoiding it carefully.
I'll only fall, yeah, yeah,
if my feet touch it.

(There is No Such Thing as a Middle Age Crisis)

When coming of age
one suddenly feels
a need for neat clothing
perhaps shorter hair.

Certain flesh offends
one's delicate eye
a crotch or a bottom
an insolent sight.

What is done is done
away from a watch.
Craking glass announces
menopause of soul.

Gracefully, the soul
curls, a golden brown,
hydrophobic, finally
contemplating sleep.

A leaf on a subway
quite properly dressed:
white shirt, and a beard,
dark glasses, a vest.

(JOCKEYS BY CALVIN KLEIN)

Men's souls
have been sung,
men's questions
posed,
their loves
analyzed,
their hatreds
metaphorized.

But the hot rhythm
of their bodies
spurting down
their tense backs,
springing up
their bulging arms
or spiraling

down their hips
is what sells
is what hits.

(OLD PHOTOS OF NAKED STRANGERS)

How deep desire is
when it consists
of imaginary conversations
with a wall
wherein hides
just a trace
of a face.

Short and sweet, desire
is neither feeling or sound
but a stare
into space.

(ANY WORKDAY NOW AND FOREVER)

Illuminations
from common men
a faint stirring
in the groin
a tossing of the head
perhaps
one step firmer
than the rest.

Mornings we
hang to bleed
dry packed
in icy steam
delivered
to the market place.
Others poke.
Others bid
(CCHA, MLA,ASPCA)

This here
the age of information,
the baah, blah, bland
of communication.
Being subversive
takes two roads.
One leads to the babble
of the waves.
Another to
a polite no.

(Come On, You Can Say It in English . . .)

Catty cat cast
the language calls.
Funny fun fund
its natural noise.
How it has lost
the luster the lust.
I may still sing
but who gives a damn?

(A Curse in a Foreign Language)

May you grow
too old
to be loved
and yet
fall in love
with love,
a burly
callous youth,
walk the streets
the whore, the fool,
show the adolescence
of your decrepitude.

(You Should Really Write a Textbook . . .)

At this moribund
stage of the century
only the truest
academicians
have right of way
printed materials
which they fashion
into cereal.
Abused pages
will give up the ghost
in the forthcoming
holocaust.

A whistle will be
a poem, afterwards.

(NO ONE READS POETRY ANYWAY...)

At some point in my life, I
do not want to describe the
morning, or the light, or my
neighbor. I want to BE the
morning, the light and my
neighbor. Either that, or
an instant picture in the minds
of my hypocritical readers
and a moral commentary of
goose-flesh and
uncontrolable (thank god)
erections.

(WHAT, NO WHITMAN?)

Clothed only in words,
an old bearded man stands
erect so I may touch
his skin and feel the
hardness of his

alphabet.

(Oh Shit, and I Am Reading Papers!)

Not precisely voluble,
short on words,
not in the bud
desire extends
towards the sky
crowned by a drop
willed to a stop.

(Hold the Lettuce, Hold the Mayo)

The loneliness
of fast food restaurants.
Time stands
agingly still
between two slices
of bread
while an obscene
deliberate hand
carries a dead
vegetable stick
as if to stab
a desperate mouth
with nature's frozen
oily gift.

(One Is Always Safest in the Classroom)

Each morning as I wake up
continuity holds my hand
to prepare me very carefully
for each of my daily tasks.

I do not waste my time
swimming into any mirrors,
looking at faces as they turn away

or counting slivers of glass.

I threw away the keys to all doors,
I do no longer suck on a rose.

And, coming evening, I say to myself,
this time for sure, without any doubts,
I am forever the rational man,
the garbage picker, doing his job.

(TEN AM. FIVE PM.)

From the silence within
the solitude of trains.

Inexorably they carry
a load of bodies about to die.

They barely stop
to break the urgency of the run.

Only the bodies change
neat in their spermatozoid rows
ejected in spurts at symmetrical stops.

(NOT NOW! I AM TRYING TO WRITE!)

I could have loved
until the flesh tore open.

I could have loved
until a thousands leaps.

I could have loved
until the last soldier.

Yet all I keep
from such desire
is a wet pen

and a dry stare.

(Sundays and Mastercard)

A relationship
deeper than love
between buyer
and seller.

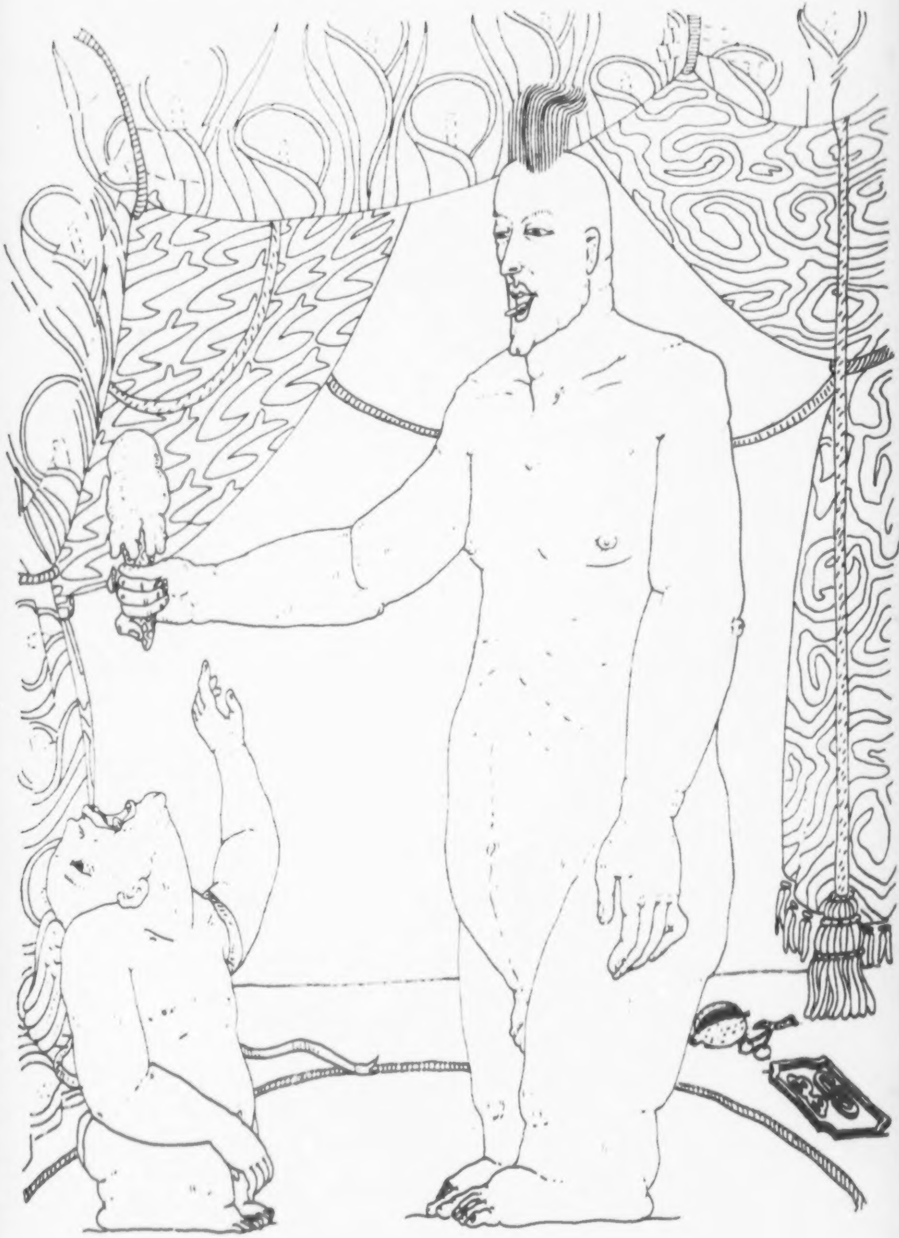
Seller has
past shapes
in desire conceived
calling from without.

Buyer sells
his present, himself,
to pay for the call.

(Where the Sun Don't Shine!)

The time has come
said inmate emeritus
to rearrange
priorities.

Goodbye, goodbye
old and new friends,
as I adjust
vocabularies.



CUNY and the Puerto Rican/Latino Community: Issues for the 1990s[1]

Camille Rodríguez and Ramón Bosque-Pérez

> *The Free Academy is now to go into operation. The experiment is to be tried, whether the highest education can be given to the masses, whether the children of the whole people can be educated, and whether an institution of learning, of the highest grade, can be successfully controlled by the popular will, not by the privileged few, but by the privileged many.*
>
> From a statement by the head of the Free Academy (City College) at the opening ceremonies in 1849 (As quoted by Lavin, et al. 1981).

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK (CUNY) has played a key role in the education of thousands of New Yorkers, many of them working poor, immigrants, and women elsewhere grossly under-represented in higher education. Today, more than ever before, the institution must prove whether it remains firmly committed to the ideals proclaimed at the moment of its creation or follows the pattern of elitist universities and limits itself to serving "the privileged few." For Puerto Ricans and other Latinos, who comprise around one fifth of the student body at CUNY, what is at stake is the possibility of improving their socioeconomic conditions through a better education or being condemned to a marginal participation in this society.[2]

Latinos are not only one of the fastest-growing groups in New York city and the state; they also seem to be the highest-risk group in terms of most social problems in a broad variety of areas. This is the case when dealing with health, education, poverty, housing, crime, and many other areas. College level education is no exception. Puerto Ricans and Latinos are among those facing the highest risk of having to work while studying, of being placed into remediation programs, of having to study part-time because of family or work responsibilities, of dropping out of college, of taking long years for obtaining a degree, and so on.

When analyzing CUNY's present and near future, four broad areas of concern can be identified: 1) the economics of higher education (budget, educational costs, financial aid); 2) issues related to the so-called "pipeline" (access, retention and completion); 3) issues related to testing and placement; and, 4) issues related to curriculum (ethnic studies, a curriculum of inclusion, and the overall quality of the educational experience). All areas must be approached having in mind the special relationship between CUNY as a higher education institution and the community it is supposed to serve.

THE ECONOMICS OF CUNY

At a point when New York city and state are facing a budget crisis of overwhelming proportions, we may see the New York public higher education system evolving from a state of crisis, to a state of disaster. Again, as in so many other areas, the prospects are that Latino students, faculty, and staff will be one of the groups suffering the heaviest casualties. The concern is increased by the perception of retreat from commitments to Latinos and other minorities within the city and state government as well as among CUNY administrators and faculty.

It must be noted that CUNY colleges receive budget allocations from different sources. While senior colleges receive their funds almost exclusively from the state budget, community colleges receive state and city allocations. Early budget recommendations proposed a 92 million cut from State assignments to CUNY, and 72 million from the city. This suggests that community colleges will be hit harder by the budget cuts. Puerto Ricans and other Latinos face a higher risk of being affected by those cuts since they represent a large proportion of the community college student population. For instance, in 1986-87, Latinos were 28.4 percent of all community college undergraduates but only 17.6 percent of senior college undergraduates (CUNY Data Book, 1986-1987).

The state and city fiscal crises will cause a decline in the availability and quality of higher education for the working poor of this city. Fewer new full-time tenure-tracked faculty are being hired with adjunct teaching becoming the norm rather than the exception. Some departments are threatened with consolidation or elimination. The size of class sections is being increased, adversely affecting the quality of instruction. With hundreds of sections being closed it is becoming more difficult for students to get into required courses. Support services are being reduced, and increased student applications for admission cannot be accommodated. In addition, funds for equipment and capital improvement of facilities will dwindle.

For more than 125 years, CUNY was able to remain tuition-free through periods of economic expansion and depressions great and small. Coincidentally, just a few years after Puerto Ricans and other minorities entered the university in record numbers (1970), tuition was imposed (1976). Since that time, tuition increase proposals have more than doubled and remain a constant threat. Although tuition appears to be modest if compared with other public colleges in the United States, tuition costs can not be properly assessed abstracting from other educational and related costs. For instance, according to data published by the federal government, the average cost of "room and board" for a four-year college in the state of New York is among the top 8 states in the United States (US Department of Education, 1991). Even combining the costs of tuition, room and board, the average for New York State is higher than 32 other states and the District of Columbia. If those are the figures for the state, the average costs for New York city college students must be even higher since the cost of living here is higher. Furthermore, increased tuition has not been assessed in terms of the particular socio-economic condition of Puerto Rican/Latino students. Puerto Rican/Latino students come from lower income levels than other groups. For instance, according to CUNY data, in 1986, 55.9 percent of Latino undergraduate students attending CUNY reported income levels below $12,000. Only 40 percent of African American students, and 17.3 percent of white students reported income levels below $12,000 (CUNY Data Book, 1986-1987).

Another issue related to university economics is fairness in the distribution of education monies. Fairness can be assessed at two different levels: first, how the assignments to public institutions compare with those to private institutions, and, second, how the assignments to the two public systems compare. To take one example, recent figures show that Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) assignments from the state are largely devoured by the private institutions. In 1986-87 private institutions in New York received 64 percent of all TAP monies but served 45 percent of all TAP recipients in the state. Meanwhile, public institutions (CUNY and SUNY) received only 36 percent of the TAP monies and served 55 percent of the students receiving that assistance (Rockefeller Institute of Government, 1989).

In addition, private universities have had a tax exempt status dating back to colonial times. Many of the more prestigious campuses have since moved into entrepreneurial activities effectively competing with profit making institutions in such areas as real estate, military and private contracts, and genetic engineering. In 1988 alone, private universities like Columbia and New York University had earnings higher than over half of the Fortune 500 companies located in New York City (Cheliotes, n.d.; Fitch, et al. 1991). Yet, they remain tax free.

A study currently under way points to serious funding inequities between the State University of New York and the City University of New York. NYS Department of Education data (1989) show that while CUNY is 62.9 percent minority (22.5 percent Latino) comparable figures for SUNY are 12.2 percent minority (3.0 percent Latino). Yet SUNY receives $1776 more per Full Time Equivalent (FTE) student than CUNY when SUNY at Stony Brook,Buffalo, Albany and Binghamton are compared to the CUNY Graduate Center, City College, Hunter College, Brooklyn College, and Queens College.[3] A lawsuit is being considered by a coalition of CUNY Concerned Faculty and Staff, leaders of student protests and community groups based on a funding equal protection claim as established by the 1954 Brown vs. Board of Education case.[4]

As grants and fellowship assignments become scarcer, Latino students must rely increasingly on loans to finance their more extended higher education experience. They must forgo full-time earnings at higher levels for a greater length of time. They must cope with higher costs in food, housing, transportation, books and clothing expenses. They must bear an educational debt on top of other debt whether they earn college credit, graduate or not. They will face narrow job choices or be employed with benefits substantially below those provided older workers.

The Latino student experience has been quite different from the experience of other groups. Our students are preponderantly female, older, heads of families, and often hold one or more jobs. More than likely, they are not full-time students. Juggling school, work and family responsibilities, they struggle to remain in the university in order to face a job market progressively requiring higher credentials and benefits substantially lower than those offered other workers.

THE "PIPELINE"

The term "pipeline" has become customary when referring to the process by which students move from basic levels of education, to more advanced stages. In the case of Puerto Ricans and other Latinos, the image of a funnel may be more appropriate — relatively wide at the entry level but with a narrow exit. While in 1988 Latinos represented around 34 percent of the City public school student body, the proportion keeps dropping as each cohort moves through the system. This is the case even at CUNY, where Latinos are better represented than in any other university system in the state (Rodriguez-Fraticelli, 1990). In 1986, Latinos represented 25.8 percent of CUNY first year students, but only 21.3 percent of all CUNY undergraduates. At the senior level they represented 14.8 percent of the students, while at the graduate level only 8.2 percent of the students were Latinos (CUNY Data Book, 1986-1987). Rather than through a pipeline, we transit through a leaky funnel.

The above figures suggest that Puerto Rican/Latino students are dropping out of college in scandalous proportions. Admitting to CUNY thousands of Latinos that would soon drop-out is no better than giving them a "token" representation in college. CUNY must provide the means and necessary resources for a more successful encounter between Puerto Rican/Latinos and college education, as it did with previous generations of students.

After open admissions (1970), CUNY experienced a surge in enrollments. While it is clear that white students were major beneficiaries, the open admissions policy was an important gain in access for Latino and African American students. Latino students have entered the university but encounter many obstacles once there. While they have ready access to community colleges, entry into the senior colleges is more problematic. Transferring between community and senior colleges proves difficult. Direct entry into a senior college very often means remediation classes with little or no credit for a year or more, and depletion of financial aid allowances.

As seen above, data for specific Latino sub-groups are not always available. Most of the time, if ethnic information is collected, all Latinos are put into the same group with the potential result of obscuring important variations among groups. It is generally recognized that different Latino groups in the United States show diverse trends in terms of education and socio-economic variables (e.g. Puerto Rican or Chicanos versus Cubans). In order to assess to what extent that is also the case in New York City, demographic changes must be tracked carefully and specific ethnic information should be collected and made available.

TESTING AND PLACEMENT

A recent report by Professor Ricardo Otheguy (City College), commissioned by the Puerto Rican Council on Higher Education and CUNY's Office of Academic Affairs, points to a misuse of testing instruments (Skills Assessment Tests in reading, writing and math) that is adversely affecting Latino students (Otheguy, 1990)[5]. While those tests should be used for the certification of minimum competency for students who reach 61 credits, in keeping with a Board of Trustees mandate, they are being used for placement of first year students. The result, according to this researcher, is that the rate of placement into remediation and the concurrent barring of students from many college courses at CUNY has exceeded national norms and has a negative impact on retention. One of the main recommendations of the study is that CUNY should "re-establish a credible policy of Open Access by admitting freshmen from the start into substantive, credit-bearing, college-level work." Otheguy calls for "compliance with the mandates of the Board of Trustees by limiting its Skills Assessment Tests (SKAT) to the certification of minimum competency for students who reach 61 credits."

Another finding reported by Otheguy is that the SKATs are not validated by a systematic process of evaluation. In other words, CUNY has not undertaken research in order to verify "whether the SKAT tests measure what they claim to measure" or other aspects of their use. Appropriately enough, the Otheguy Report insists on the necessity of subjecting the SKATs to "a thorough program of validation research." The reliance on a "pass/fail" approach is also strongly criticized as unnecessarily harsh. The report suggests the development of a set of diagnostic procedures "that would meet modern standards of large-scale testing" in order to replace the currently misused SKATs.

The Otheguy Report also evaluates the implementation of English as a Second Language programs and the degree of support that CUNY is giving to those programs. In this regard, Otheguy concludes that CUNY should "expand its support of ESL programs" (Otheguy 1990).

CURRICULUM ISSUES

As the economic situation in the City University of New York deteriorates, programs and services responsive to Puerto Rican and Latino needs come to be viewed as expendable. These programs and departments are seen as a marginal part of higher education, as overly concerned with community needs, as too narrow or too broad in the challenge they present to the traditional departments. The role they play for Puerto Rican/Latino students or in the life of the Latino community is neither understood nor acknowledged. The pressure is to consolidate all Latino or minority concerns into a smaller and smaller space in the academy.

More recently, a College Preparatory Initiative has been proposed as a program to strengthen the high school experience for students. It is projected as a partnership between the New York City Board of Education and the City University of New York. Its proclaimed purpose is to ensure that entering students are prepared to deal with college level work. The initiative seems to address several levels of concerns: the quality of the academic experience in public secondary education, CUNY's remediation efforts, and CUNY's record of retaining and graduating minority students.

While these concerns are appropriate, the proposed solutions appear to be old remedies couched in new terminology. In essence, new standards will be set for entering students. The applicant will be expected to complete a high school degree with a minimum of 16 academic units in required areas. The solution focuses on what is expected of the student and the high schools.

What is not adequately addressed is what this means for Open Admissions and efforts to enrich the quality of the educational experience for Puerto Ricans and other minorities once in CUNY. In addition, the program needs to be evaluated within a context of the condition and resources of public schools — in particular those attended mostly by Puerto Rican/Latino and other minorities — poor retention and graduation rates, and reduced educational funding at every level. In addition, Latinos are entering the educational system in record numbers and at a point when a reduced tax base is promoting efforts to downsize public educational institutions. Finally, as economic pressures on the middle class increase, they will compete for entry into lower priced public universities, further narrowing access.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Concretely, we propose:

a) That the recent trend toward tuition increases be reversed in order to safeguard CUNY's mission. In this sense, other sources of revenue must be explored to cover budget limitations.

b) That a State Commission be established by legislative mandate to assess the performance of public universities in responding to the needs of a growing Puerto Rican and Latino constituency.

c) That the differences in terms of budget allocations between CUNY and SUNY, as well as private institutions, be carefully examined and steps be taken toward the elimination of any existing inequities.

d) That policies for collecting ethnic information at CUNY and other institutions be monitored to insure that the types and availability of data collected allow proper evaluation of demographic changes in the City's Latino community.

e) That the City University of New York initiate firm actions along the lines suggested by the Otheguy Report, beginning with the immediate cessation of the use of SKATs for placement purposes.

f) That the actual implementation of the College Preparatory Initiative be postponed until a thorough assessment is made of the impact this project would have on entrance, retention and graduation of Puerto Ricans and other Latinos in CUNY.

g) That the budget crisis should not undermine efforts to improve the quality of the higher education experience of our students. Particularly we call for the strengthening of programs such as Puerto Rican Studies, Dominican Studies, African American Studies, Asian Studies, Women Studies, and of broader initiatives like education for bilinguality, curriculum of inclusion, writing across the curriculum. We believe that Puerto Ricans and Latinos have entered the academy but are in an increasingly precarious position. Proposals and discussions in reference to the budget crisis have tended to shift responsibility away from the public senior colleges onto minority communities — Puerto Rican, Latino and African American. The trend will lead public higher education back to an exclusionary, elite and class-biased institution.

We need to change the terms of the current debate. We must stop short-sighted and quick solutions to fiscal dilemmas. This is a call for an investment in our community and an investment in our state. CUNY and its mission must be saved!

NOTES

1 This article was written during the summer of 1991 for the Institute for Puerto Rican Policy's publication "Towards a Puerto Rican/Latino Agenda for New York City." The authors wish to thank Mr. Angelo Falcón and the Institute for consenting to the present publication in *Punto 7*. We also thank Frank Bonilla, Cynthia López, Jos de Jesús and David Glassberg for their critical comments on an early draft.

2. Since data for specific Latino groups are not always available in many instances we are forced to use figures for all Latinos. The proportion of Latinos would

vary according to what base is used for the calculation, i.e. if the total includes undergraduate and graduate students, full-time and part-time, degree seeking and non-degree students, and so forth. According to data provided by the CUNY Office of Institutional Research and Analysis (August 1989) in 1988 Latinos represented 20.2% of all CUNY students. African Americans were 28.1, Asians 7.9, White 39.3, Foreign 4.1, and Native Americans were less than 1 percent.

3. Full-Time-Equivalent is a measure used by institutions of higher education to include part-time students in the calculation of the total enrollment reported to federal and state agencies. The "full-time equivalent of part-time students" is added to the number of full-time students. See US Department of Education, 1991 for definitions.

4. Figures taken from a data sheet produced by Dr. Sheldon Weinbaum for the CUNY Concerned Faculty and Staff. This effort is a direct result of the Spring 1991 student protests. Dr.Sheldon Weinbaum, CUNY Distinguished Professor of Engineering at City College and active member of the CUNY Concerned Faculty and Staff, is the inspiration behind this investigation.

5. The process that led to this Report was initiated in 1986 by a group of concerned Puerto Ricans working with the Puerto Rican Council on Higher Education (PRCHE). During the initial stage, a key role was played by Jesse Váquez (Queens College), María J. Canino (Rutgers), Josephine Nieves (Community Service Society), Gabriel Haslip-Viera (City College), Clara Rodríguez (Fordham), Ana Celia Zentella (Hunter College), Frank Bonilla (Centro de Estudios Puertorriquueños), Emmo Alvarez (Centro), and Carlos Rodríguez-Fraticelli (Centro), among others.

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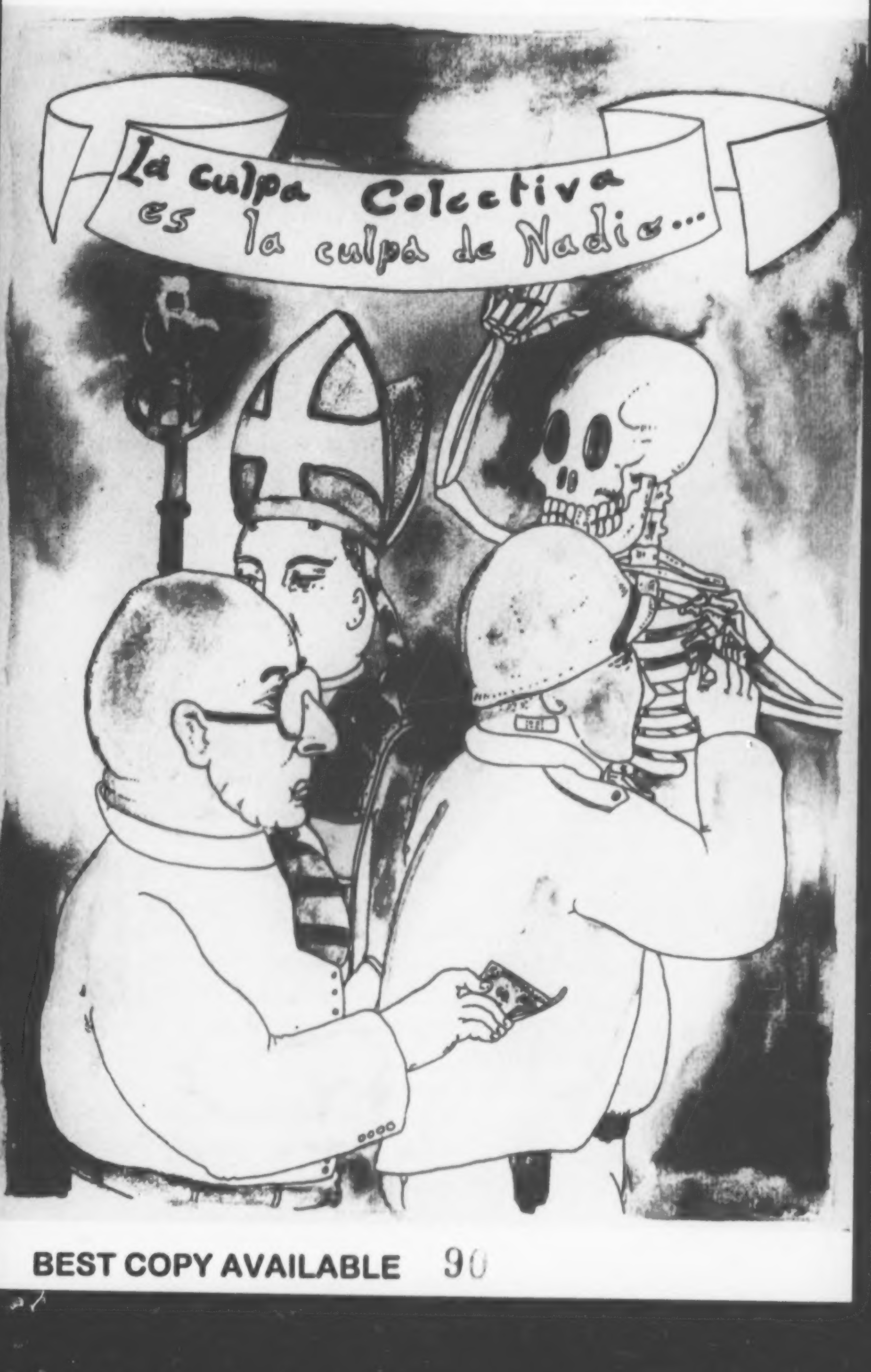
La culpa Colectiva
es la culpa de Nadie...

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English Only:
Its Historical Antecedents[1]

Gerald Meyer

THE SO-CALLED ENGLISH ONLY movement — whose primary stated goal is the passage of a Constitutional amendment establishing English as the official national language — may appear as something new, or unexpected, or aberrant. A cursory look at relevant aspects of United States history, however, reveals that the roots of this movement are deeply planted.

The Alien-Sedition Acts of 1798 established one basic paradigm for American politics: attacks from the right would invariably target the immigrant. In this, the original instance, the conservative wing of the founding fathers combined restrictions on speech and assembly for all with restrictions on the rights of noncitizens. The Act increased the residency requirement for voting for newcomers from five to fourteen years and granted the president for two years almost unlimited power to deport aliens he considered enemies of the republic. Jefferson successfully argued that these measures violated the First and Fifth Amendments of the Constitution and upon assuming the presidency led the movement to nullify these measures.

An increase in the number of immigrants fleeing the potato famines in Ireland in the 1830s and 40s and the failed revolutions of 1848 in Germany gave rise to a vast anti-immigrant movement. Originally organized as the American Party, its secret character gave rise to the name "Know Nothings," which was the response its members gave when inquiries were made about the party. By 1856 eight states had Know Nothing governors, and Congress in 1857 had five Senators and fourteen Representatives from the Party. The Liberty and the Free Soil parties, which advocated a cordial welcome to immigrants, saw the Know Nothings as a diversion from Abolition. "Neither the Pope nor the foreigners ever can govern the country or endanger its liberties," wrote Charles Dana, a prominent Abolitionist, "but the slave breeders and slave traders *do* govern it...." Many radicals viewed the Know Nothing movement as a slave owners' plot to divert the abolitionist movement.[2] Shortly, the antislavery movement forced a realignment of United States politics and rendered Know Nothingism irrelevant.

Starting in the 1880's an unprecedented immigration began. First more than one million and then more than two million immigrants annually entered the United States. These immigrants were largely from Eastern and Southern Europe: they did not speak English and most were Catholics and Jews. More disturbing to the growing nativist forces organized into the American Protective Association were the radical political ideas of many of the immigrants. On May 1, 1886, the trade union movement called for strikes to demand the eight-hour day. The most enthusiastic response came from the immigrant workers in Chicago, who organized a general strike. On the following workday the strike spread, and the police opened fire, killing four of the workers massed to prevent the hiring of strikebreakers. The next day at a rally in Haymarket Square organized to protest these murders, a bomb exploded which killed seven policemen. Eight union leaders (seven of whom were German immigrants) were charged with conspiracy to murder — only two had been on the scene of the explosion and no evidence was ever presented linking any of them to the bombing. Seven received the death penalty and four were sent to the gallows. Before the trap door opened, August Spies shouted: "Our silence will be more powerful than the voices you strangle today." Out of the international movement to free the Haymarket Martyrs and obtain the eight-hour day arose the celebration of the international workers' day — May Day.[3]

The seemingly endless requirement for cheap labor by the expanding United States industrialization temporarily quieted the growing xenophobic impulses. However, the nationalist fever engendered by the United States' entry into World War I joined with the need to suppress all opposition to a war which many saw as imperialist.[4] The repression of the left increasingly focused on the foreign born. In a series of raids, Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer arrested ten thousand aliens suspected of being radicals. During the early morning hours on January 2, 1920, Palmer Raids were carried out in seventy cities. Six thousand aliens were held for weeks without formal charges or benefit of legal due process — 556 were deported.[5]

The earliest restrictions on immigration were tied to the anti-Red hysteria. The Immigration Law of 1903 excluded anarchists. The 1917 Immigration Act initiated a literacy test, excluded all who belonged to revolutionary organizations, and eliminated any time limit within which radicals could be deported.[6]

The twenties saw a spectacular resurgence of the Klu Klux Klan. By 1924 it boasted five million members and had enormous political influence. Its major targets were Catholics, foreigners, and Jews as well as African Americans. In the 30s Communists and labor organizers were added to the list.[7]

But one event seemed to epitomize the status of the immigrant. On May 5, 1920, Bartolemeo Vanzetti, a fish peddler, and Nicola Sacco, a shoe factory worker, were arrested and accused of killing a guard in a payroll robbery. Their antiwar activities (they had fled to Mexico to evade being drafted), their anarchist beliefs, but most of all their foreign origins, their accents, were exploited by the prosecutor and the judge to prejudice the entire judicial proceeding. They were condemned to death for a crime they could not even have dreamt of committing. A world-wide movement rose to their defense. On August 23, 1927, seven years after the night they were executed, strikes of hundreds of thousands of workers broke out. In New York City the police fought with a demonstration of fifty thousands, and outside a prison in Boston surrounded by the state militia holding fixed bayonets, thousands of sobbing demonstrators were beaten back by the police.[8]

Preparation for war again joined xenophobia and anti-Communist hysteria. In 1940 the Smith Act combined the requirements of registration and fingerprinting of aliens with a clause calling for the deportation of any alien for previous membership in the Communist Party. In the House of Representatives only Vito Marcantonio, American Labor Party representative from East Harlem, spoke against the Smith Act.

When during the same term a bill was forwarded to deny aliens public assistance and jobs in government projects, Marcantonio denounced this as "disgusting bigotry." He reminded his colleagues: "Starve the alien father and you starve the American children.... No restrictions were placed against [aliens] when you needed men to fight and die. They were sent to war...and [now] you are going to deprive them of relief?" He recalled that historically immigrants had been "induced to come here to be used as cheap labor — industrial cannon fodder of the labor exploiters....These people helped build America....[Now] we persecute them under the name of America. This is not Americanism, it is know-nothingism."[9]

The least well known and least acknowledged aspect of the McCarthy Era was its scapegoating of the foreign born. On October 20, 1950 the Internal Security Act, commonly known as the McCarran Act, went into effect. Among other things, it codified that present or former membership in any organization listed by the Attorney General as subversive to national security was grounds for the denial of citizenship, for deportation of noncitizens, and for exclusion from the United States. Deportation hearings were exempted from the Administration Procedure Act, and the Attorney General was given the power to hold for life without bail noncitizens ordered deported. Two days after the passage of the McCarran Act at 2:00 AM the Immigration Service began a series of arrests in New York, Deluth, Los Angeles, and Seattle. The Justice Department announced its intention to deport immediately 3,400 for their beliefs. A study of 307 people targeted by the Justice Department for deportation showed that: two-thirds were over fifty-five years old, 60 percent had lived in the United States for at least forty years, and eight of them had entered the United States when they were less than one-year old. Many had married native-born Americans and over half had American born children. Sixty-two were unable to speak or read the language of their country of origin.[10]

The movement to impose the English language is only the most recent manifestation of the right wing scapegoating the communities of immigrants and their children. English Only is a branch of a movement which is dedicated to dismembering bilingual education and re-erecting linguistic barriers to the use of the ballot and to access to public services.

The impulses of this movement are the same impulses that feed racism and homophobia. They are intended to devalue, denigrate, disapprove, discredit, and defame a minority. English Only wishes to disempower the Latino community, to take away what it already has: its language, its culture — thereby creating total dependence on the dominant culture and its institutions. This would prevent its political organization, and thereby its ability to coalesce with other oppressed minorities.

The struggle against English Only can only be won through the effective political organization of those most affected. Then the links between the Latino community and the other oppressed minorities must be securely made.

But the work of practical politics will never succeed until the proponents of pluralism gain hegemony over the production of culture and ideas. What is the definition of democracy that we need? Why should not cultural rights be ranked equal to individual rights? Should not the definition of liberty include the right to speak the language of our own choosing. In the fight to defend Spanish and all the other languages spoken in the United States we must advance our vision of a pluralistic society which celebrates diversity, a society which will value and promote languages other than English, a democracy where minorities of all kinds can develop their own cultures while contributing and partaking of the general culture. In opposition to the imposition of English Only all the progressive forces in the United States must demand Language Freedom.

Footnotes

1. A talk presented at the English Only Versus Language Freedom Conference, sponsored by the Hostos Solidarity Coalition at Hostos Community College on October 20, 1989.

2. Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party before the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 234, 239.

3. Richard O. Boyer and Herbert M. Morais, *Labor's Untold Story* (New York: UE Press, 1970), pp. 91-104.

4. Boyer and Morais, pp. 200-201. The meeting halls of the Industrial Workers' of the World were burned. Its members were arrested and lynched. The government banned all Socialist newspapers from the mails. In 1918 the Socialist Party candidate for President, Eugene V. Debs, received a ten-year sentence for insisting during a speech in Canton Ohio: "The master class has always

declared the war; the subject class has always fought the battles. The master class has had all to gain and nothing to lose; while the subject class has had nothing to gain and all to lose — especially their lives." While in prison, Debs received almost one million votes, many from the immigrant communities in the large cities.

5. James I. Clark and Robert V. Bemini, *We the People: A History of the United States* (Beverly Hills: Glencoe Press, 1975), pp. 390-91.

6. Louise Pettibone Smith, *The Torch of Liberty: Twenty-Five Years in the Life of the Foreign Born in the U. S.* (New York: Dwight-King Publishers, 1959), pp. 25-29. Immigration from non-European areas including India, and the West Indies were essentially eliminated. In 1921 the number of immigrants admitted from any country in one year was limited to 3 percent of the persons of the nationality resident in the United States according to the census of 1910 for a total of 357,803. The Act of 1924 reduced the new quota to 2 percent of the group according to the census of 1890 and limited the total admitted to 153,000.

7. Robert Coughlan, "Konklave in Kokomo," in *The Private Side of American History. Vol. II: Since 1865*, Thomas R. Frazier, ed., p. 199.

8. Boyer and Morais, pp. 225, 236. Inside the prison Sacco and Vanzetti wrote their last words. Sacco advised his young son, Dante, "help the weak ones who cry for help, help the persecuted and the victim because they are your better friend, they are your comrades that fight and fall as your father and Bartolemeo fought and fell . . .for the conquest for the joy of freedom for all . . ." Vanzetti wrote: "If it had not been for this thing I might have lived out my life among scorning men. I might have died unmarked, unknown, a failure. This is our career and our triumph! . . .This last moment belongs to us — this last agony is our triumph!"

9. Gerald Meyer, *Vito Marcantonio: Radical Politician, 1902-1954* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1989), p. 69.

10. Smith, pp. 256-258, 352-53. The individual cases of these people are heartbreaking to recount. Giacomo Quattrone of Boston, resident of the United States for forty-five years stated: "I don't know anybody in Italy any more. Everybody I care about is here." (He had eight American-born children.) At sixty-five Giacomo Quattrone was deported to Italy. Others were deported to third countries because their politics endangered their lives if they returned to the countries of origin. As a result, for example, a number of Greek Americans were deported to Poland.

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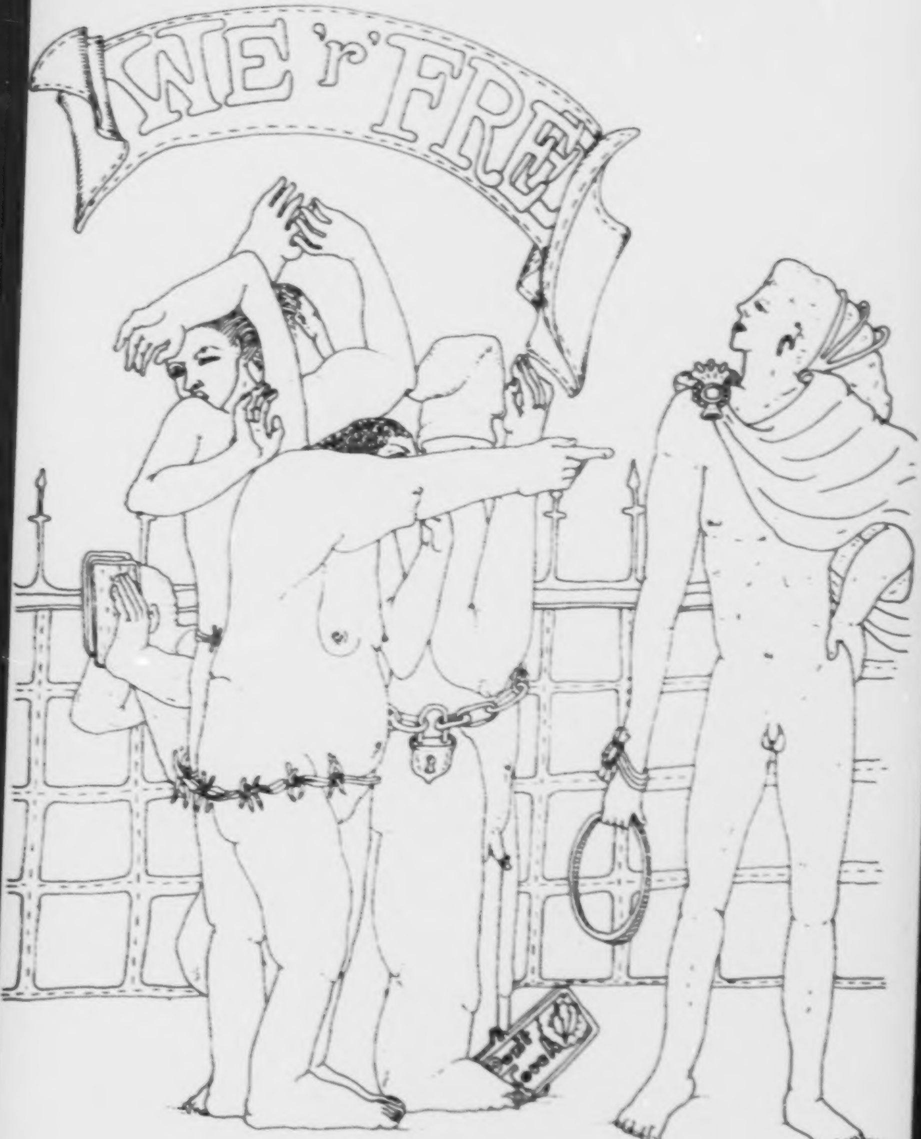

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What's Behind the English Language Amendment: An Update[1]

Henry Lesnick

LEGISLATION TO AMEND THE U.S. CONSTITUTION to establish English as the official language of the United States is presently being considered by Congress. Similiar legislation has been passed in seventeen states and is pending in twenty others.

The victories of the official-English referendums in Arizona, Colorado, and Florida in late 1988 are particularly significant when seen against the backdrop of the disclosures which prompted the resignations of the top leaders of US English, the major lobbying force behind the campaign to pass the English Language Amendment.

Three weeks before the election, Linda Chavez resigned as US English president and Walter Cronkite resigned from the group's advisory board. It was revealed that a major contributor to the group was the Pioneer Fund (*Arizona Republic*, October 9, 1988), which was chartered in 1937 to promote "racial betterment" and to popularize the theories of "applied genetics" as practiced in Nazi Germany; it has also financed genetic research of William Shockley and Arthur Jensen purporting to prove that blacks are intellectually inferior to whites (*New York Times*, December 11, 1977).

That same week the content of a memo by US English founder and chairman, John Tanton, was made public. Tanton writes of the "Latin onslaught," bringing with it "the tradition of the *mordida* (bribe) and the lack of involvement in public affairs," "low educability," and "high fertility." Tanton asks "Can homo contraceptivus compete with homo progenetiva? As Whites see their power and control over their lives declining, will they simply go quietly into the night?" (*Arizona Republic*, October 9, 1988). The discovery of the memo by the press also prompted Tanton to resign.

These developments were widely publicized in the three states before the election. The organization that led the ELA campaigns was seriously embarassed. Virtually every major political figure in Arizona and Colorado opposed the ELA. Yet US English scored impressive victories which will do much, as the late US English honorary chairman, S.I. Hayakawa, wrote, "to propel [the] drive to pass a Federal Constitutional Amendment" (1988). The apparent strategy of US English is to win referendums in as many states as possible, postpone any serious implementation of the state amendments which might galvanize opposition, and build a critical mass of support to amend the U.S. Constitution to guarantee, as declared most unequivocally in Arizona's Proposition 106, that English is "the language of the ballot, the public schools, and all government functions and actions."

The English Language Amendment could effectively deny language minority citizens the right to vote by eliminating the bilingual ballot; it could deny language minority students what is presently their most effective method of instruction by severely curtailing bilingual education programs; and it could deny language minority persons equal protection under the law by eliminating translators in governement agencies.

This amendment could render many of the provisions of civil rights and voting rights laws of the last twenty-five years unconstitutional. It would be only the second constitutional amendment in two hundred years which limited rather than protected and extended individual rights, the other being the Eighteenth Amendment establishing Prohibition. The movement to amend the Constitution to establish English as the offical language is of historic importance.

US English has defined the public agenda of the ELA movement, declaring curtailment of bilingual education and elimination of the bilingual ballot primary goals in its struggle to preserve the nation's cultural and political integrity (1984).

With regard to the first, the General Accounting Office has reported to the Congress that the preponderence of evidence supports "the [bilingual education] law's requirement of the use of native language to the extent necessary to reach the objective of learning English" (*Research Evidence on Bilingual Education*, March, 1987). Native language instruction of students with undeveloped literacy skills facilitates their acquisition of English literacy by developing the cognitive skills necessary to literacy in any language. It is easier for most students to achieve literacy in a second language once they have achieved it in their first. Having a more accurate understanding of the educational research evidence than the English Language Amendment advocates, virtually every major educational organization concerned with language and language learning has formally resolved to oppose the English Language Amendment. The consequences of this amendment for the education of students with limited English proficiency would be far reaching.

The legal implications of the amendment are also significant. US English has already notified the Registrar of Voters in Los Angeles County that ballots and voting materials in any language other than English violate the California State Constitution as amended by Proposition 63 in November of 1986. Elimination of the bilingual ballot and the consequent denial of the effective exercise of the right to vote would seem to run counter to the traditional protections in this area in the same way that the poll tax and literacy tests did. The Fourteenth Amendment guarantees that the right to vote will in no way be abridged "except for participation in rebellion or other crime."

The declaration of English as the official language could also call into question the use of a language other than English in publicly regulated media. The First Amendment protection of speech was challenged in the 1985 petition of the FCC by US English to ban Spanish language radio in South Texas. Although US English lost this effort to deny access to the airwaves to Spanish language media, the likelihood of the success of such a petititon would be greatly increased if the ELA were passed.

Should this amendment be adopted, a new constitutional basis for the interpretation of the legal status of existing services and protections provided language minorities would be established and could elicit legal challenges of all governmentally sanctioned activity using a language other than English. California's English Language Amendment explicitly invites such litigation by granting residents the right to challenge any law that "diminishes or ignores the role of

English as the common language." The proposed constitutional amendment is not, as the unsuspecting assume, a simple, patriotic affirmation of the place of English in U. S. society, nor is it, as its proponents argue, a goad to encourage non-English speakers to learn English and achieve assimilation into the social mainstream. Everyone already knows that English is the language in which the affairs of this society are conducted. Everyone understands that proficiency in English is required for access to the social and economic opportunity we all desire. Cloaked in the seemingly simple intent of the English-only legislation is a program of far reaching implications, which would undermine the education of children with limited English proficiency as it would undermine basic, constitutionally guaranteed rights.

Rather than promote assimilation, the amendment can only further polarize American society. Curtailment of already inadequately supported educational programs and the attack on basic rights of language minority citizens and immigrants can only deepen their alienation from the social mainstream.

The actual consequences of the English Language Amendment would be diametrically different from the ELA advocates' stated goals, perhaps because a primary though unstated goal of US English and its allies is the creation of a less hospitable environment to discourage the flow of immigrants from Central and South America, Mexico, and the Caribbean. An official in the Department of Education, "Rusty" Butler, who has also served as a spokesperson for US English, warned in a 1985 publication of the Council on Inter-American Security that bilingual education was part of a strategy adopted by Hispanic leaders to facilitate terrorists' crossing into the U.S. to commit acts which would lead to the establishment of an Hispanic nation within the United States.

The connection between promoters of the ELA program and anti-immigrant sentiment is not casual. The founder and former chairman of US English, John Tanton, is also the founder and chairman of the Federation for American Immigration Reform, which favors a highly restrictive immigration policy and has lobbied vigorously against the immigration law's provision for granting amnesty to undocumented immigrants. Gerda Bikales, former Executive Director of US English, was also an officer in Tanton's anti-immigration group (New York City Bar Association symposium transcript, December 10, 1986). The attempt to discourage immigration is a less palatable goal to many Americans than the promise of an integrated society, and may therefore be one less publically acknowledged by the leaders of the English Language Amendment initiative, but it is clearly the one that animates and unites the leadership of the anti-immigration and ELA lobbies.

This proposed constitutional amendment is so thoroughly predicated on the denial of traditional democratic values and rights that growing recognition of its consequences can only give rise to growing opposition to its passage. Such opposition has already formed, particularly among individuals and organizations most concerned with the educational social, and legal implications of the ELA. The American Federation of Teachers, The National Education Association, The National Council of Teachers of English, the International Association of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, the Linguistic Society of America, the Modern Language Association, the Education Committee of the New York State Assembly, the Council of College Presidents of the City University of New York, the Chancellor of the City University of New York, the Governor of New York, the American Jewish Committee, the American Civil Liberties Union, and the Harvard Law Review have spoken out against the ELA.

These organizations and individuals are joined in their opposition to the ELA by leaders from the country's two major political parties. President Bush writes, "the English Language Amendment could stir up prejudice and curtail linguistic education programs that I think are absolutely essential in order to teach all Americans to speak English properly" (1987). Jesse Jackson says, "I am a strong supporter of bilingual education and reject the scapegoating of immigrants that such a bill would suggest" (1988).

Despite the growing body of informed opinion opposing the English Language Amendment, the ELA lobby, with recent annual budgets approaching ten million dollars, has exerted a considerable influence on the thinking of many in state and Federal legislatures and in the country at large. There can be no doubt of the need for a strong, concerted effort to defeat the ELA. Only as those with greater understanding of the issues raised by the ELA enter the debate, can we help dispel the fictions advanced in support of the ELA and help clarify the serious dangers of this proposed constitutional amendment.

Notes

1. An earlier version of this paper appeared in *NABE News* (June, 1988).

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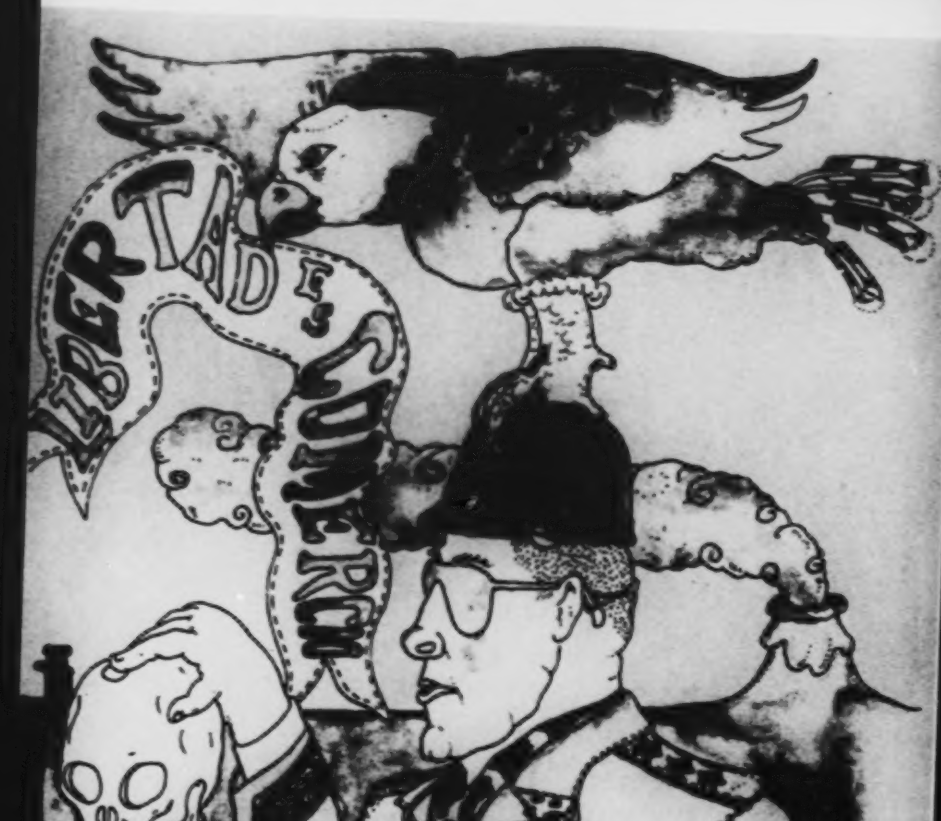
LIBERTAD ES COMERCIO

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Madre Luna

José Luis Colón Santiago

Para Laura, Alnaldo, Linetty,
la piel del viento y el néctar de la tierra.

La mar alzaba cresta.
Yo soñaba alto como la luna.
Tú soñabas alto como mi sueño;
La luna estaba lejos en las brasas de la tarde.

Hacia pico de montaña caminé contigo.
Al principio tú quisiste caminar conmigo;
te cansó la elevación y regresaste.
Fui contigo, quise llenar tu cabeza de besos
y tú reíste.

La mar alzaba cresta nuevamente.
Yo soñaba alto como la luna.
Miré el pico más cercano, cualquier pico.
– ¿Quieres caminar conmigo ?–
– Quiero–
– Allá en cualquier parte de allá
podré besarte más tranquilo–

Tu piel brillaba fresca y tus ojos miraban lejos;
me alegré por eso.
Caminamos y más allá de la falda cansaste tu apetito.
Bajaste hondo rodando con mis entrañas.
Si hubieras subido comigo yo habría rodado contigo.

Antes de tu bajar
juntos construimos primera casa;
con una ventana y una puerta de entrada.

En las noches tibias
dormíamos ventana abierta,
cuando luna estaba más cerquita,
cuando era bola redonda.

Tú con ojos grandes y negros
mirabas hacia la luna,
yo ponía mi cabeza sobre
tu pecho desnudo y lo besaba.

En nuestra primera casa olía a tierra,
a madre de sueños vivos.

Cantábamos con alegría de primerizos.
Era grande nuestro Mundo
más que las estrellas
que alumbran tu destino.

Gavilán Blanco volaba sobre nosotros.
Huimos rumbo al río.
En el camino Gavilán Blanco
quería comer tu barriga.

Tú mordías los labios
y yo con piedra espanté a Gavilán Blanco.

Descansamos a la orilla del río
y con los corazones sudados
nos besamos más que antes.

Yo quise cruzar río;
tú conmigo, subiríamos
por el otro lado de la montaña.

La luna estaba lejos en las brasas de la tarde.

Hablé con ilusión;
–Gavilán Blanco, no pudo comer tu barriga–
reíste y acariciaste entrañas.

Y con sabor vegetal
subimos felices hacia pico.

Llegamos a pedrega,
Pichón Negro avisar
que Gavilán Blanco
preparaba traición;
y zumbaba vientos fuertes
para matarnos.

Vientos llegar con fuerzas
de muchos búfalos
y comenzaron a tambalearnos,
yo amarré tu barriga a mi cintura
para que no voláramos.

El campo todo se estremeció
y Fuego de Cielo bajar sobre nosotros.
Entonces andamos como animales
para no morir, hasta encontrar cueva.

En cueva brillaban las paredes.
El corazón tembló menos,
y dormimos abrazados
hasta que la mañana alumbró los campos.

Por la mañana
bajamos al río para desayunar
y beber dulce agua.
En río bañamos nuestros cuerpos
desnudos.
Jugamos con agua y nadamos.
Dije,
–Subiremos hasta nacimiento de río–
Dijiste,
–Subiremos, pero cuándo llegaremos a la luna.
Dije,
–La luna está lejos en las brasas de la tarde–

Pusiste triste tu cara,
yo quise alegrarla y besé tu mejilla.
Luego corté flor de amapola
y la puse en tu cabello.

Miraste mi cara con ojos de preguntar,
besaste mi mano y la pusiste sobre tu pecho.
Comprendí y quise alentarte
pero te negaste a mis caricias.

Mi corazón lloró con llanto de dolor.
Te dije, cuando vi a Gavilán Blanco
buscarnos sobre los montes,
seguro mañana llegaremos.
Te abrazaste a mi pecho;
y te dije otra vez.
–Subamos por el río
para evitar a Gavilán Blanco–
–Subamos–

Se veía el cielo azul entre el follaje
y el sol se sentía calentar la vida.

La mar alzaba cresta
yo soñaba alto como la luna.

Llegamos al nacimiento del río
y tú gritaste con dolor de entrañas.
Nació hijo lindo y fresco.
Y mi corazón lloró con llanto de alegría

Construimos segunda casa al lado del río
con dos ventanas y una puerta grande.

Tú sentiste gran felicidad
con niño y conmigo;
y yo sembré yuca y maíz y adoré.

Gavilán Blanco supo del niño
y quería saber nuestro paradero.
Te dije,
–Pichón Negro avisar planes de Gavilán Blanco;
Gavilán quiere comerse el crío–

Te asustaste y miraste mi cara
con acusación en tus ojos
y no oías mis palabras.
Te dije,
–Tenemos que partir para salvar niño–
entonces hablaste,
–Nunca llegaremos a la luna, mejor bajemos–

La luna está lejos en las brasas de la tarde.

En algún lugar de allá no habrá Gavilán.
Miraste con esperanzas y dijiste–Vamos–

Pichón Negro me dio noticia.

Gavilán Blanco
nos buscaba sobre los montes.
Mataba inocentes que no sabían de nosotros,
desolaba sembrados
y quemaba viviendas.

Tu corazón y el mío se asustaron
y corrimos hacia el desierto.

Gavilán nos vio desde el cielo
y atacó con furia,
tú cogiste niño y huiste hacia despeñadero
y quedaste guindando con niño abrazado.

Gavilán Blanco
estaba encima de ti con sus grandes alas levantadas.
Yo con palo le di en la cabeza;
Gavilán huyó y te puse a mi lado.

Me miraste con mucho odio,
te separaste de mí
y corriste rumbo abajo,
y corriste abrazada a mi niño.

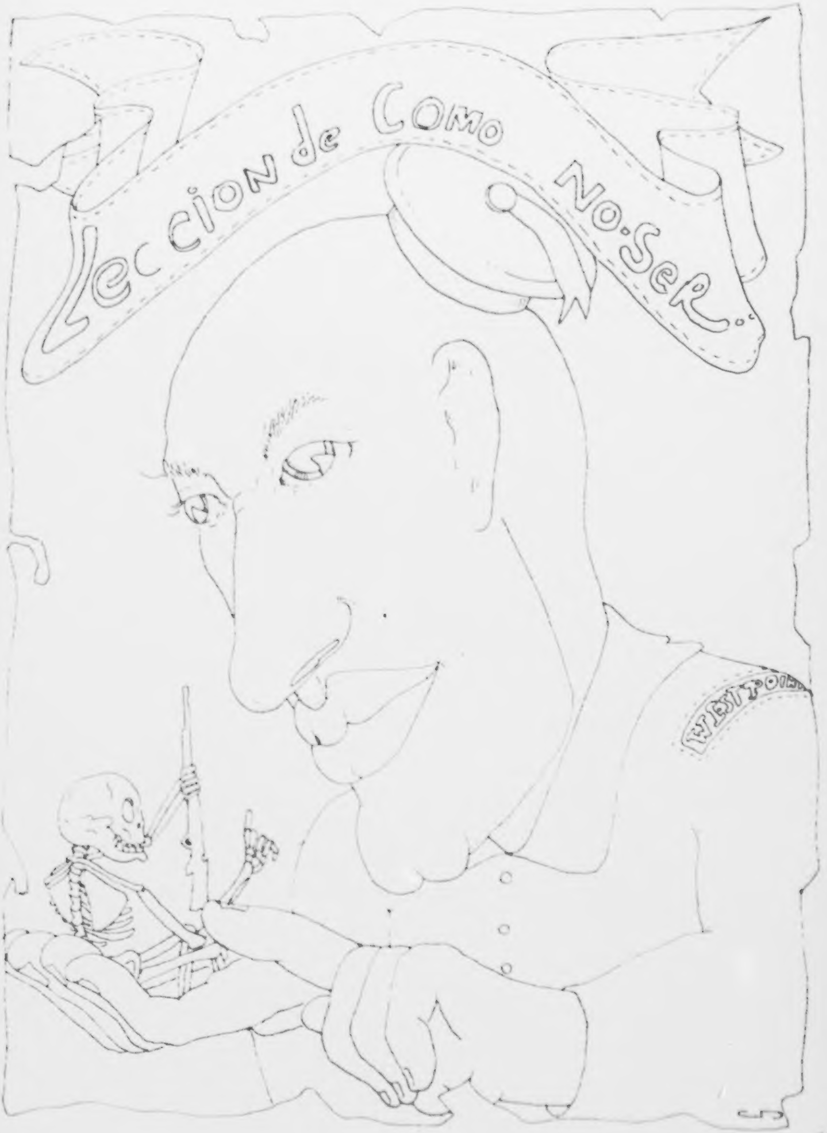
Si hubieras subido conmigo
habríamos alcanzado la luna.

La mar alzaba cresta
yo soñaba alto como la luna.

La luna estaba lejos en las brasas de la tarde.

Caminé un poco
hasta que vi a Gavilán Blanco
volar sobre el pico.
Más allá del pico estaba la luna.
Las brasas de la tarde y pico parecían estar juntos.

Esperé hasta que Gavilán se fuera;
y subí hasta mismito pico.
En el pico no había luna;
la luna estaba más lejos todavía
y las brasas de la tarde se escondían en la noche.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Western Discourse and the Curriculum
(The Uniting of Multicultural America)

Silvio Torres-Saillant

For Dr. Frank Bonilla
and Dr. Donald Smith,
staunch keepers of the faith

I. PREAMBLE

THE NATIONAL DEBATE over the contents of the school curriculum as well as over particular approaches to the teaching of literature and history in American classrooms evokes concerns which transcend the realm of the purely academic or pedagogical. The issues raised are of great consequence to us all. Such questions as whether or not we should adopt a multicultural curriculum and, if so, to what extent, or, which specific version of multiculturalism should we embrace derive from much deeper worries about the American experience. Heartfelt, earnest concerns over the meaning of Americanness, the political value of culture, the uses of the past to shape current and future attitudes, the relationship between education and patriotism, and, ultimately, the permanence of the United States as a mighty bastion among the nations of the earth are at the core of this dispute.

Consequently, the voices that have adamantly joined the intellectual brawl include not only scholars from major universities, but also U.S. senators, newspaper publishers, White House personnel, top education officials, powerful union leaders, prestigious news commentators, columnists of national stature, and even the President of the Republic. The passionate tone assumed by most of these prominent spokespersons clearly suggests that in their eyes there is a lot at stake. The feeling that the way in which one defines Americanness will shape America in the years to come lurks behind their zealous utterings. We cannot, therefore, understate the importance of the debate currently before us.

One may argue that we are all bound by sociohistorical imperatives to choose one side and not another. I, for instance, as a member of the Dominican community in New York, one of the most recent immigrant groups in the city, belong to that diffuse demographic mass often referred to as "New Americans." I cannot trace my origins back to the individuals who came here on *The Mayflower* or to those who built the continental railroad. Instead, I fall within that category of people in America for whom belonging is more a matter of will than of inheritance. My views on the curriculum are likely to have been the direct product of this distinct background, reinforced perhaps by my experience as a teacher at Hostos Community College, a South Bronx CUNY campus with a student population made up primarily of low-income Latinos, a small percentage of African-Americans, and smaller percentages of recent Asian and Eastern European immigrants. My American experience, then, has occurred within the framework of socioeconomic circumstances that may not necessarily parallel the American experience of a native-born, Northern European-descended scholar who holds an endowed chair at Cornell, Harvard, or Yale.

My approach to the debate on the curriculum, therefore, carries with it the baggage of a specific ethnic, social, and historical background. How I foresee the future of my community in the United States further molds my understanding of what this country ought to be. Indeed, one's opinion regarding what and how our youngsters should learn may very well result from a combination of the way in which one envisions the destiny of America and how one prefigures the place of one's particular community in the context of that destiny. I, for one, advocate a curriculum that is capable of giving our students an appreciation of the multiple and diverse cultural matrices that have lent ingredients to the formation of this country. Only such an encompassing scope can accurately account for the American experience in all its amplitude. In saying that, I hasten to acknowledge, I reveal a kinship, whether I like or not, with those who have spoken on behalf of a "curriculum of inclusion." By echoing a concept that has aroused the indignation of powerful academic, media, and political figures, I am destined, as it were, to close ranks with the weaker side of the debate.

II. INCLUSION AND ITS FOES

Looking at the glamour enjoyed by those who speak against the proponents of a curriculum of inclusion can give us a sense of the unequal nature of the debate. Power resides with those sectors that decry inclusion and advocate a return to the traditional curriculum as it existed before the wave of changes brought about by social movements of the 1960s and 1970s. In the conservative ideological ambiance ushered in by the demise of the socialist bloc, it has become fashionable to dismiss speakers for social change as historically retrograde. At this juncture, one can easily attain intellectual celebrity by brandishing a discourse that invokes an earlier, presumably more stable period in America, prior to the 1960s, when the curriculum was less of a contested terrain. Thus, Diane Ravitch, author of some of the most vigorous pronouncements against those demanding a curriculum that is representative of America's various ethnicities, has earned a federal appointment as Assistant Secretary of Education. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., a respectable historian of the old guard and former presidential adviser, has regained intellectual currency by means of a best-selling book in which he construes the "ethnic upsurge" prevalent in American schools as a misguided "cult" that poses a grave threat to the idea of America as "a single nation" (Schlesinger 1992:43).

In 1987, Allan D. Bloom achieved distinction nationally by castigating some of the most significant changes undergone by the curriculum over the last twenty-five years. More recently, Dinesh D'Souza, a former White House staff member during the Reagan administration, has risen to academic stardom by arguing that the changes in question have tended to water down the intellectual substance of the education formerly available to American students. He sees serious political implications here. He claims that with a curriculum tailored after the biases of women and ethnic minorities, students can no longer hope to receive a liberal education, that is, one informed by the search for truth and the exaltation of the highest ideals of civilized society. Deprived of such a benefit, which only a Western-centered traditional education can provide, D'Souza argues, American students are coerced into the dogmas of a narrow-minded, "illiberal education" (D'Souza 1991:229).

That D'Souza is a recent immigrant from India, a country at the heart of the Third World, is not insignificant. For here we have a "person of color" deriding the efforts of those seeking a place for non-European peoples in the curriculum. The idea of a Third World man affirming the preeminence of the Western cultural tradition as the embodiment of the highest human values universally might seem paradoxical in post-colonial times. Yet a swift glance at books that have received critical acclaim in some of the major mainstream periodicals over the last three years makes it evident that D'Souza is hardly an isolated case. He represents, in fact, the latest fad in the intellectual market.

Major publishers have discovered that, in the prevailing political atmosphere, producing books by people of color who renege the social causes often championed by their own minority communities is good business. Thus, books by African-American authors who set out to "deconstruct" and show the drawbacks of affirmative action policies and other preferential programs, chiefly the best-selling texts by Shelby Steele (1991) and Stephen Carter (1991), have gained nation-wide visibility, enjoying the favorable reception of mainstream intellectual fora. Linda Chavez, a Hispanic woman who has spearheaded the cause of the English-Only movement, achieved widespread recognition by denouncing bilingual education and other "entitlements" as deceptive strategies whose only beneficiaries are Hispanic activists who have "developed a vested interest in showing" Hispanics as victims in American society (Chavez 1991:5,170).

These days the windows of major bookstores conspicuously display a scholarly compendium by a black Caribbean author, the sociologist and novelist Orlando Patterson, who undertakes to celebrate the Western tradition by contending that the concept of freedom is an exclusively Western value. Here we have a black man, whose ancestors endured subjection precisely at the hands of the West, claiming that "non-Western peoples have thought so little about freedom that most human languages did not even possess a word for the concept before contact with the West," and that whenever their list of values included freedom it was always within "the context of Western culture and its influence" (1991:x). Equally celebratory of the Western legacy is a book that has brought prestige to Francis Fukuyama, an Asian-American, former State Department official, who maintains that "liberal democracy," which has become firmly established in key Western nations, may constitute the "end-point of mankind's ideological evolution" and the "final form of human government," thus marking the "end of history" (Fukuyama 1992:xi).

One might say that the success enjoyed by Steele, Carter, Chavez, D'Souza, Patterson, and Fukuyama in the intellectual market may have to do more with who they are than with the caliber of their arguments and ideas. The fact that they are people of color who speak, as it were, against themselves makes them irresistible in the eyes of those sectors that control the making of public opinion. In a very pernicious way, these minority spokespersons are the ultimate beneficiaries of preferential programs. As my colleague Brijraj Singh has said to me, with mordant precision I think, a book by D'Souza on Alexander Pope or one by Chavez on John Dewey would not elicit the interest aroused by what they have written, provided, that is, that their publishers even deem their thoughts on Pope and Dewey as worthy of publication as their revisionist critiques of minority causes. Clearly, in upholding views that are typical of the political establishment, they render a valuable service to the dominant discourse in this country. Conversely, in using them as mouthpiece, the ideology of power and its structures shows resourcefulness in perpetuating itself. Such resourcefulness, which includes the ability to change skin color if need be, is today being deployed to protect the vision of America that is insinuated in the traditional curriculum. When it comes to the debate over the curriculum, in other words, power is on the side of the foes of inclusion.

III. THE CASE AGAINST MULTICULTURALISM

A statement by the National Association of Scholars, an organization formed specifically to combat what is seen as the current onslaught against the traditional curriculum, warns that "multicultural education" might occur "at the expense of studies that transcend cultural differences," such as mathematics, science, and history (NAS 1992:K17). Regarding existing efforts to introduce "other points of view" and "pluralism," the NAS perceives with alarm the "growing politicization" of the academia, where "women's studies and minority programs" reveal "much excoriation of our society for its alleged oppression of women, blacks, and others. The banner of 'cultural diversity' is apparently being raised by some whose paramount interest actually lies in attacking the West and its institutions" (NAS 1992:E17). Reacting to the same perceived threat, news commentator George F. Will denounces the current focus on "the needs of 'diversity'," as a "code word," an "umbrella under which radicals cluster to advocate academic spoils systems–racial, ethnic, sexual–politicized curriculums," whose ultimate aim is "delegitimizing Western civilization by discrediting the books and ideas that gave birth to it" (1992a:72;1992b:72).

Similar remarks were made last year in New York when the Board of Regents was evaluating guidelines for a new social studies curriculum to be used in public schools throughout the state. A newspaper editorial viewed the prospect for "public school multiculturalism" with alarm, alluding to negative precedents in New York and California, chiefly the case of Oakland, where a new curriculum had been "specifically designed to denigrate white Americans and basic American values" (*NY Post* 1991:22). U.S. Senator Alfonse D'Amato concurred with the editorialist, stressing, as columnist Fredric Dicker reported, that the multicultural education suggested by the guidelines under examination at the Board of Regents would make it difficult for people to "become part of American culture" (Dicker 1991:18). The Senator's words were subsequently echoed by Albert Shanker, the powerful president of the American Federation of Teachers. When the new curriculum was adopted by the New York State Board of Regents, Shanker proclaimed not only that efforts to implement it "may end up sacrificing accuracy for diversity," but that the curriculum "would pull us apart," with the result that youngsters "who are now happy to think of themselves primarily as Americans may learn to see themselves primarily as Hispanics or African-Americans or Jews" (Shanker 1991a:E9;1991b:8).

Understood as a problem, the idea of multicultural education "in its most extravagant current form" has been traced to "the campus turbulence" ignited by the civil rights movement in the 1960s and, later, by the widespread dissent around the Vietnam war. Its momentum was further compounded by the massive influx of Third World people into the United States through the passing by Congress of the 1965 Immigration Act that virtually changed the country demographically (Gray 1991:15). It is in this broad context that many see the politicization of campus life, with the result that today "a troubling number of teachers" tend to take it as their mission "to bring about social change" (Henry III 1991:66). The forging of an ideological environment on campus wherein everyone may appear to respond to a given cause that is morally and politically "correct" has an oppressive effect on those who simply see things differently. Civil libertarians grieve over what they see as "the new turns of thought" that "are fostering a decline in tolerance and a rise in intellectual intimidation" (Henry III 1991:66). The distinguished scholar Frank Kermode sees here a case in which "authoritarian restrictions on free speech and unargued surrender to militancy go cozily together," producing a sort of ideological imposition that "might be thought useless as well as tyrannous" (Kermode 1992:3).

Concretely, references to speech codes allude to the fact that three years ago Stanford University, worried by overt expressions of bigotry on campus, instituted a code prohibiting speech that is racially offensive. "Since then, 100 colleges and universities have passed similar codes, many of them so broad and open to interpretation, critics say, that the rules have chilled normal intellectual discourse," leading to complaints that construe the situation as "a new kind of intolerance: a McCarthyism of the left" (McFadden 1991:15). The concern over what conservative spokespersons have perceived as a potential loss of freedom of speech has reached the highest echelons of American society. President George Bush himself has thought it proper to address the problem and endeavor to ward off the evil of "political correctness." In a commencement speech to University of Michigan graduates in 1991, the nation's chief of state felt compelled to condemn the implementation of "acceptable" speech codes. His message included remarks as direct as these:

> The notion of political correctness has ignited controversy across the land. And although the movement arises from the laudable desire to sweep away the debris of

> racism and sexism and hatred, it replaces old prejudice with new ones. It declares certain topics off-limits, certain expression off-limits, even certain gestures off-limits....And in their own Orwellian way, crusades that demand correct behavior crush diversity in the name of diversity. We all should be alarmed at the rise of intolerance in our land, and by the growing tendency to use intimidation rather than reason in setting disputes (Bush 1991:A32).

Perhaps the President and the brand of opinion he represents will have less reason to agonize over "the rise of intolerance in our land" in view of the Supreme Court's decision, in late June 1992, to strike down the City of St. Paul Bias-Motivated Crime Ordinance, which had been invoked to punish the conduct of a white youth who, together with several of his peers, burned a cross inside the fenced yard of the home of Russ and Laura Jones, a black couple, and their five young children. All nine Justices of the country's highest court agreed that it is unconstitutional for legislatures to single out racial slurs, sexual or religious insults as bias-crime. They agreed with the white youth that the St. Paul ordinance restricted free speech and, consequently, violated the First Amendment. In so doing, they have given the foes of the much-ridiculed concept of political correctness a very powerful weapon, whose repercussions on campus life is likely to be noticeable, to put it mildly.

Another of the practices that, like the institution of speech codes, have been deemed reprehensible by conservative spokespersons is the attempt to achieve a reasonable degree of ethnic mix on campus. In November 1991, Education Secretary Lamar Alexander repudiated the action of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, an important regional accrediting agency, which had deferred the reaccreditation of CUNY's Baruch College on the grounds that the college had shown an insufficient effort to hire minority faculty members and administrators or to retain minority students. Contending that the use of cultural diversity and ethnic composition of faculty and staff as criteria for accrediting colleges "inhibits institutional autonomy and academic freedom," the education chief ordered a delay in the Government's reauthorization of the

Middle States agency until an independent panel could review the case (De Witt 1991:26). Alexander's order marked the first time the Federal Government has ever challenged the standards applied by an accrediting agency in its assessment of academic institutions. And there is no little irony in the fact that such an important precedent should take place precisely as an attempt to question the validity of a demand for diversity.

Perhaps the most serious grievances over the implementation of measures to foster ethnic and cultural diversity on campus, as articulated by the critics of such measures, involve charges of reverse discrimination and intellectual mediocrity. D'Souza states categorically that American colleges and universities have simply lowered their standards for admission in order to accommodate "students from certified minority groups — mainly blacks and Hispanics — who have considerably lower grade-point averages and standardized test scores than many white and Asian-American applicants who are refused admission" (D'Souza 1991b:54). To illustrate the tendency to dilute the intellectual content of the curriculum, D'Souza cites Stanford University's replacing "its long-standing Western Culture requirement" with

> a program called Cultures, Ideas and Values, which stressed works on race and gender issues by Third World authors, minority-group members, and women. In practice this meant that texts such as Plato's *Republic* and Machiavelli's *Prince* would have to make way for such works as *I, Rigoberta Menchu*, the political odyssey of a Guatemalan peasant woman who discovers feminism and socialism, and Frantz Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth*, a passionate argument for violence against colonial oppression (D'Souza 1991b:53).

D'Souza's tirade against current practices in many academic settings epitomizes the plaints of many of the distinguished spokespersons who advocate an urgent return to a former state of affairs. In sum, the argument is that recent reforms in schools throughout the nation have debased the processes of admission, hiring, and curricular design, which have become subservient to the irrational demands of non-white and women activists. If that perception is accurate, human decency should compel us to feel a similar animosity against an order of things that blatantly perpetrates discrimination against white students and shamelessly corrupts the high quality education our students should have.

IV. QUALITY OF THE ARGUMENT

In light of the above perception, the accuracy of the claims put forward by the detractors of multicultural reforms warrants elucidation. A clearly divergent perception appears in the "Statement of Principles" drafted by Teachers for a Democratic Culture, a national organization of educators formed to rebut the alarming picture of contemporary education construed by the National Association of Scholars and their ideological allies. The statement, among other things, says that "recent curricular reforms influenced by multiculturalism and feminism have greatly enriched education rather than corrupted it. It is our view as well that the controversies that have been provoked over admissions and hiring practices, the social functions of teaching and scholarship, and the status of such concepts as objectivity and ideology are signs of educational health, not decline."

A look at the presuppositions and the rhetorical strategies exhibited by D'Souza's discourse, which typifies the statements of most prominent detractors of multicultural reforms, may give us grounds for assessing the contention by Teachers for a Democratic Culture that the traditionalist argument rests on a number of false assumptions. As exemplified in the remarks by D'Souza quoted above, he identifies curricular and demographic changes on campus as the fundamental causes of the presumably dismal state of American education. Diluting the intellectual substance of the curriculum, proponents of diversity and pluralism have degraded the learning experience of all students and have sponsored administrative measures that overtly trample upon white students, D'Souza claims. He presents us with a scenario that leaves no room for doubt, with one single moral choice standing out palpably. We have simply an instance of good, upheld by the traditionalists, versus evil, represented by the advocates of reform.

The rhetorical strategy whereby D'Souza depicts his scenario relies exclusively on dichotomizing reality and, as such, lacks complexity and depth. D.W. Griffith made effective use of it in his classic film *Birth of a Nation* (1915), particularly in scenes like the one in the latter half of the movie where the viewer sees a white damsel in distress about to endure abuse at the hands of a band of ferocious black males. The penury of the defenseless maid comes to an end when the gallant knights of the Ku Klux Klan, bearers of the cross, appear on the screen riding to her rescue. The aggressors having suffered their well-deserved punishment, justice is served and the viewer's moral sense is satisfied. Leni Riefenstahl used a variation of the same rhetorical principle in her *Triumph of the Will* (1936). I have in mind primarily a touching moment when Adolf Hitler appears tenderly holding a baby, having momentarily detached himself from the orderly march that parades the greatness of the Third Reich along a wide boulevard.

Both instances show a manipulation of the symbology of good and evil that tends to induce the viewer's sympathy for the Klan and Hitler. The Klansmen show might, valor, and justice applied against the barbarous audacity of the black assailants. The Führer appears robed in goodness, dispensing tenderness, fatherly affection, and the almost poetic disposition to forgo the call of statesmanship for the sake of the innocent. In each case, the image construction pursues an ideological end by framing reality within dichotomous oppositions. Placing good at one extreme and evil at the other, Griffith and Riefenstahl depict their characters as belonging in either one or the other end of the polarity. D'Souza's characterization of traditional versus multicultural education resembles the rhetorical orchestrations of the two film-makers. In his eyes, traditional is fair, multicultural unfair; the former elevates the intellect, the latter lowers it; one liberates the mind, the other imprisons it. He allows no middle ground nor dialectical relation, only diametrical opposition.

The unvexed nature of many of his remarks suggests also that D'Souza, like the rest of his ideological kin, assumes an approving audience. Confident that his reader agrees with him beforehand, at times he simply dispenses with an argument. He cites with considerable disgust the Stanford course in which Plato's *Republic* and Machiavelli's *Prince* had to make way for the biography of Rigoberta Menchu and the book by Fanon. But he feels no compulsion to try to show precisely what is wrong with the deal. He does not attempt to edify his readers as to the particular values that make the text by the Italian Renaissance author superior to the Guatemalan peasant's biography as an expression of humane ideals. Similarly, we are at a loss for some instruction that will enable us to understand how Fanon's book should constitute a less significant or less profound statement on the human experience than Plato's dialogue. He cites the offense and keeps going, showing no didactic interest at all. He seems convinced that placing a Francophone Caribbean author and a story about a Latin-American peasant next to an ancient Greek philosopher and a sixteenth century European writer is inherently outrageous. And he assumes that the reader will unquestionably share his outright contempt for Third World cultural products. The same rhetorical approach pervades most of D'Souza's other qualms about academic reform. He expresses distress, for instance, about a recent conference in which young academics were reported to have agreed that "just about everything...is an expression of race, class or gender," or about a dean of humanities in a major university who admitted to seeing her scholarship as an extension of her political activism (D'Souza 1991a:17-18). His discontent, however, does not lead to a systematic analysis aimed at revealing the error he finds implicit in those views. Instead, he takes it as a given that his reader knows exactly what he means.

The perceptible assumption that their audience shares their values, tastes, and ideas often makes the traditionalists sound hopelessly superficial. Devoid of complexity, their utterings seldom offer a sustained argument. They speak as if, their audience already on their side, they did not need to persuade anybody. As a result, they often descend to the level of diatribe, generally dispensing with originality of thought and intellectual sophistication. Since their tirades against the champions of school diversity in matters of curriculum, personnel, and student admission tend to lack scholarly rigor, they normally commit the one sin they have most frequently imputed to their opponents. Like Oedipus, they are convicted by their own edict. In fact, their unsophisticated level of reasoning or merely the customary absence of a legitimate argument against multiculturalists makes it uncontrollably tempting to conclude that the interest aroused by their discourse has nothing to do with intellectual merit. It has to do solely with a harmonious correspondence between their opinions and the values espoused by the conservative ideology that has prevailed in key sectors of American society since the beginning of the Reagan years. That the views of D'Souza, Ravitch, and their ideological kin have resonated in statements by Education Secretary Alexander and President Bush, as well as by major media figures, indicates that they are, in effect, the fortunate beneficiaries of the political ambiance informing the minds of people in power sectors of America today.

V. A WOMAN CALLED RAVITCH

Succinctly, the multiculturalist argument as regards academic content is that curricular materials ought to represent the cultural and ethnic diversity of the society we live in and the student population we serve. Objections to that position have ranged from claims that the existing curriculum already does that to declarations that schools should be kept out of such discussions which only threaten to turn the classroom into a battle camp for political ideologies. In geometry, the argument goes, a triangle has always had three sides and will continue to have them irrespective of the class, gender, or race of the students. In history, Rome conquered Greece, and no amount of lobbying from minority activists is going to alter that fact. Education, thus viewed, is a neutral event and school a locale where disinterested learning happens. You either acquire knowledge or you do not. All other social issues are irrelevant and do not have a place in the classroom.

Such assumptions, at any rate, lurk behind the plaints of Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind* (1987) and E.D. Hirsch's *Cultural Literacy* (1987). Bloom longs nostalgically for a time when schools where not plagued by the intrusion of such entities as Black Studies and Women Studies. Hirsch, on the other hand, complains that educators in the United States have lost touch with the *sine qua non* of American education: "a common language." But the person whose position merits the most attention is Diane Ravitch, the Assistant Secretary of Education. Her views deserve particular examination not only because of her authoritative rank and that she, unlike the other prominent traditionalists, is a trained historian of education, but also because her views have met with the approval of Albert Shanker. If Shanker, who has arranged to give Ravitch a welcoming forum in the American Federation of Teachers' various publications, has accurately interpreted the sentiments of his constituency, it follows that the majority of teachers in the public sector, the sector where students from ethnic minorities in the country are most likely to attend, share the way Ravitch thinks. In light of that possibility, those of us who teach predominantly minority students cannot afford not to ponder on her opinions.

The marrow of Ravitch's ideas on the curriculum can be discerned in her tirade against the signatories of a document entitled *A Curriculum of Inclusion*, a report produced by the Task Force on Minorities: Equity and Excellence, a 17-member committee convened by New York State Commissioner of Education Thomas Sobol to "review the curriculum and instruction guides issued by the State Education Department to see whether they adequately reflect the pluralistic nature of our society" (Task Force 1989:ii). In general the report states that while progress has been made in recent times, curricular materials continue to marginalize, distort or omit the contributions of groups of non-European origin to American society. In other words, recent "attempts to include in history books and social studies materials information about non-European achievements are shown to be appendages rather than integral to the main body of information" (Task Force 1989:vi).

Ravitch denies validity to the findings reported in *A Curriculum of Inclusion*, claiming that the state's curricular materials are "insistently" and "thoroughly multicultural," and "are not racist or culturally biased in any sense" (Ravitch 1990:20). She thus discards the report, contending that "it manages to denounce bias without being able to identify a single instance of it in the curricular guides under review" (ibid.). For Ravitch, the task force members' own Europhobia alone causes them to reproach the state curriculum's Eurocentrism (ibid.). She then proceeds to argue that if the curriculum, as it stands, reflects a significant presence of European culture, it is simply because the European legacy is the source of this country's heritage.

"Europe's legacy to us is the set of moral and political values that we Americans subsequently refined and reshaped to enable us, in all our diversity, to live together in freedom and peace" (ibid.).

Ravitch characterizes the signatories of *A Curriculum of Inclusion* as proponents of what she terms "particularism," an approach which in her view emphasizes that which sets people apart instead of what brings them together, rekindling "ancient hatreds" rather than "promoting reconciliation and a sense of shared community" (ibid.). "Particularistic education," she says, presents the past "as a story of victims and oppressors, and it endorses the principle of collective guilt" (ibid.). Ravitch faults the task force's report for dividing the American people into five groups: African Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, Latinos, and European Americans. She raises a two-fold objection. She finds an ethnocentric implication in the report's division of "American society into five separate but equal melting pots," and she questions the accuracy of the division on methodological grounds. She says: "In reality, none of the five labels used by the task force represents a single culture," and adds that "teachers and students must understand that children who speak the same language or have the same skin color may come from very different cultural backgrounds" (ibid.).

Much can be said to show that Ravitch did not read the task force's report too closely, and that she allowed her disagreement to distort the claims made in the document. Regarding the objection just cited, for instance, the report takes particular care to caution against any monolithic perception of the groups under discussion. First, the report is emphatic in stating that the groups in question do not cover the entire American society, not even New York State, where there are "many different cultures," which could not be studied in the project because, as the signatories declare, "our time and resources were limited" (Task Force 1989:1). Their hope, as articulated in the "Introduction," is simply that "actions taken to make accurate and open relationships among these five cultures, their histories and achievements, will be applicable to interactions between these cultures and all other cultures not specifically addressed in this report" (Task Force 1989:1).

A report arguing that the different ethnic groups in our society ought to receive fair coverage in the curriculum can be deemed ethnocentric only if one engages in considerable mental acrobatics. The proponents of *A Curriculum of Inclusion* argue precisely against the ethnocentrism that characterizes the present Eurocentric curriculum, and favor, instead, a curricular arrangement whereby all cultures, in the manner of King Arthur's knights, sit at the Round Table as equals, in a non-hierarchical order whereby "no culture is master" (Task Force 1989:vi). What they propose, in fact, is a decentralized view of human culture, which is diametrically opposed to ethnocentrism. One would need the Protean logic of sophistry to construe that claim as ethnocentric. But Ravitch insists in characterizing their call for cultural diversification of the curriculum as "particularistic," and presenting it as dichotomous with truly multicultural and pluralistic ideas. Elsewhere she articulates the dichotomy thus: "The essential difference between pluralism and particularism is that the former combats ethnocentrism and the latter teaches it" (Ravitch 1990b:A44).

The other component of Ravitch's objection distorts the report even further. When she questions the accuracy of the five ethnic classifications used in the report on methodological grounds, she writes as one who has not read the document she purports to criticize. She seems simply to overlook statements made throughout the report to the effect that none of the ethnic classifications are monolithic. The text states in the "Introduction" that "there is great cultural diversity within all of the cultural groups referred to in the report" and that "care must be taken to recognize and respect the variations" (Task Force 1989:1). In the section entitled "Definitions," the text insists that "within each of these categories there are many subgroups, each with characteristics with the potential to make members different from members of other subgroups," even though the task force judged that "it would not serve the purpose of this report to make distinctions" (Task Force 1989:17).

The report is emphatic on this point, and pertinent clarifications pervade its pages. On its third page we read that "it is important to warn about the current tendency to group all Latinos...into a descriptive classification of 'Hispanics,' an ethnic category that presumes a homogeneity for all Spanish-surnamed individuals," thus distorting or muting "significant differences — historical, social, political, and economic–among the different groups." The report acknowledges the variety of national origins, language, and cultural traits existing within each of the five divisions used all the way up to the last page, where we read that Native American tribes "are separate and distinct entities, each with their own cultural identity and political philosophy" (Task Force 1989:38).

These clarifications seem too insistent for a reader to manage to overlook them. One is thus hard put to explain why Ravitch faults the report for *not* acknowledging the differences contained within "the five blanket labels that the New York task force adopts," as she says (Ravitch 1990:46). Professor Ravitch does know how to read, or else she would not have climbed as high up the educational ladder as she has. One must, out of professorial respect, assume also that she read the entire report and did not simply skip the many parts where clarifications like those just cited are made. How then to account for her speaking as if she had not read the report she has set out to criticize? I would like to venture a possible answer: the text of the report was merely a pretext.

I believe Ravitch's distortion and trivialization of the ideas proposed by *A Curriculum of Inclusion* arise from a stance she had already held before the report appeared. Her reading of the report did not provide her with an opportunity for a critique or textual analysis. Rather, it merely served as an outlet for ventilating her contempt for critics of the traditional curriculum. What we can discern from her erratic evaluation of the findings in the New York report is really the unbosomings of a troubled heart, the heart of a staunch representative of the dominant discourse whose hegemonic position is threatened by the demands being made — ever more adamantly — by spokespersons from minority communities no longer resigned to their condition of marginality in the United States. Not incidentally, when she argues against the proponents of a new curriculum, be they the New York task force or any other, she simultaneously affirms the traditional curriculum and celebrates the virtues of the Western heritage, which she proposes as the key to unity and peace in American society. She denies that "Western culture excludes the voices of people who are female, black, Hispanic, and Asian" as a "ridiculous" accusation, since, as she says, "we need only look around to see that all of these groups are very much part of Western culture" (Ravitch 1990b:A44).

In a book published two years before the New York report, Ravitch had already had occasion to grieve over the onslaught of scholars and educators against the traditional curriculum, claiming that they "judged the very idea of the traditional curriculum to be irrelevant" instead of seeking to expand it if they perceived the need for a change (Ravitch and Finn 1987:10). She mourns the loss of the traditional curriculum primarily in literature and history and expresses nostalgia for universal consensus on matters of aesthetic judgment. She says: "Something of value is lost when there is no coherent literature curriculum, no professional consensus about which writers and which works are superior. Such curriculum...helps young people to understand how the culture came to be what it is, how it was shaped, which writers redefined it and thereby changed the way we see ourselves" (Ravitch and Finn 1987:10). She feels that the old curriculum gave a view of America that had cohesion: "Whatever its fault, at least the old tradition had a point of view about who we are as a people," though admitting the possibility that such "a point of view could be disputed" (Ravitch and Finn 1987:11).

Regarding the issue of diversity she would discourage ethnic communities from focusing too much on their own experience: "No less than whites, [blacks] should be knowledgeable about chronology and geography, about the forces and trends that have shaped the nation they live in" (Ravitch and Finn 1987:249). She fears that attention to individual cultures or races would militate against a sense of national identity. "If there is no overall community, if all we have is a motley collection of racial and ethnic cultures, there will be no sense of the common good," she affirms, fearing that particular interests will cause division and lead to the disintegration of the nation, resulting in "the kinds of ethnic conflicts that often dominate the foreign news each night" (Ravitch 1990:19).

Ravitch's forebodings appear well intentioned at first. She seems to have an earnest concern for unity. Americans of all colors should aspire to building a society in which the words "E pluribus unum" are really borne out by fact. We should all dream of harmony reigning in the intercultural and interracial relations of a society where individuals of diverse branches of the human species and different extractions share space and power as equals, thus constituting one people out of many. If that is the ideal informing her view of education, then we must concede that her concern is noble. We cannot say the same about her approach, though. For the way to bring about unity is not to assume that we already have it. The way to make people sensitive about and respectful of ethnic and cultural differences is not simply to close one's eyes and frenetically repeat that we already are multicultural. Nor is it honest to speak as if the phrase "ethnic conflicts" described events strictly in the realm of "the foreign news." Only amnesia and myopia combined can keep one from confronting the ubiquitous presence of racial hostility in the country we live in. During Jesse Jackson's bid for the presidential candidacy to the Democratic party, George Will described him as a "Third World radical." Now, we all know that America is part of what at least until recently was called the First World, and that Jackson is an American. But we also know that on account of his race many believed he did not belong in a presidential campaign. It comes as no surprise, then, that the distinguished news commentator should think of an epithet that renders him alien.

Racial animosity is hardly the "foreign" phenomenon Ravitch wishes to see. One need only behold the many youths who in recent years have joined the ranks of white supremacist organizations. If there are 70,000 to 80,000 members of such organizations in California alone (Perlo 1988:92), the figure must rise to the hundreds of thousands throughout the nation. New York, one of the most liberal of states in the entire union, has been the arena of such odious incidents as are conjured up by the names Howard Beach, Bensonhurst, and Crown Heights. And Los Angeles, California, land of the perennial sun, has bequeathed to us the Rodney King case. The New York case involving Bernhard Goetz, whom the *New York Post* celebrated as a "golden-haired warrior," became an issue for racial arguments. The movie *Do the Right Thing* was evaluated by some reviewers in terms of its potential contribution to racial discord in the city. I remember reading an article by Spike Lee in *New York Magazine*, in which the African-American film-maker addressed the charge by a white critic that his movie, in so far as it could incite violence, would hurt the campaign bid of then mayoral candidate David Dinkins. Lee argued that even if the charges against his movie were true, the notion that what he did could hurt the political career of Dinkins, merely because they are both black, was an utterly racist sort of reasoning that could incite more violence than any movie he might make.

It would not be precipitous to state at this point that Ravitch's perception and evaluation of present conditions do not accord with observable phenomena. Nor should she expect her nostalgic languor for a golden age when the traditional curriculum reigned supreme in schools throughout the nation to earn sympathy from everyone alike. Those who only in the last few decades have succeeded in winning some of the social prerogatives that confirm their humanity in school, in the workplace, and in other spheres of life will think otherwise. To long for the good old days may be fine for early immigrants of Anglo-Saxon extraction. But other ethnic groups may not share the pleasure of the trip back to memory lane. If you are black, and you go back before 1965, you realize you could not vote even though you had to pay taxes and fight in wars. If you go back, you see an American governor blocking the entrance door in order to prevent the color of Meredith's skin from defacing the placid eden of the university campus. If you go back, you come upon a series of lynchings that, starting in 1881, lasted until 1962 (Ploski and Williams 1989:567). Policemen, water hoses, and dogs chasing after the colored crowd do not make for soothing memories of a better time. The brutal murders of Medgar Evers, Emmett Till, and three little girls in church hoping for salvation may obstruct the desire to pastoralize the past. If you go back, you find brilliant and multi-talented Paul Robeson confined to oblivion for speaking on behalf of the race. You encounter Marian Anderson kept from singing angelic melodies at Constitution Hall because the freedom-loving Daughters of the American Revolution could deal with her voice but not with her skin. The farther back you go the closer you get to the Middle Passage, and that could send a chill down your spine.

If you are a Native American, the farther you recall the closer you get to the arriving *Mayflower*, the beginning of your troubles. If you are Latino, say Mexican, retrieving your historical steps may cause you to stumble upon the moment when the United States expanded its borders to envelope you, making you an ethnic minority in the confines of your own homeland. Say you are Puerto Rican and you dare to remember: you find yourself back in 1898, your country invaded and subsequently annexed. You are encouraged to migrate to the margins of the main, the pot already cold and you cannot melt. If you are Chinese, you might be tempted to ward off the memory of the U.S. Congress passing an Exclusion Act to keep you out. Or say you are Japanese and you do not forget. You might be haunted by a gentleman's agreement in 1907 to ensure that you do not get in or, later, the concentration camps in which you were forcibly confined, having been declared un-American even if you were born in Kentucky, saluted the flag, and ate apple pie. If you are a woman, you might find it sad to recall the image of Lucy Stone, visionary and superb, looking up a college far away from home because there wasn't one in these United States that would permit her thoughtful sex to prod into the sphere of the intellect.

Ravitch's nostalgic recreation of the way things were will no doubt elicit suspicion from women and ethnic minorities. The unity she seems to long for constitutes a yearning for a stability that was based on the unchallenged hegemony of white males in practically all areas of American life, when minorities, that is, were in no position to assert themselves and make the demands they have now been making in the last few decades. In that sense, one could also say nostalgically that the American family, as a social institution, was more stable sixty years ago than it is today. But on closer inspection it may become plain that the old stability was based on ignoble conditions. At the time women were less empowered to challenge the patriarchal order even by seeking a divorce and had no choice but to submit to their condition of subjection. Oppressive situations are stable for as long as the oppressed remain unable to stir the foundations of the arrangement. But there is no fairness in such stability.

VI. THE POLITICAL IMPERATIVE AND HISTORY

To advocate changes such as are laid out in documents like *A Curriculum of Inclusion* is, in the understanding of the likes of Professor Ravitch, to encourage "the politicization of all curricula in the schools" (Ravitch 1990:48). As a historian, she is particularly bothered by this since, she claims, "History is distorted when interest groups exert political pressure on teachers, textbook publishers, and school board members to have the past taught their way" (Ravitch 1990:16). She decries what she sees as the destructive turn being taken by certain advocates of multicultural education, for their multiculturalism is really particularism. They, she contends, "neglect the bonds of mutuality that exist among people of different groups and encourage children to seek their primary identity in the cultures and homelands of their ancestors" (Ravitch 1990:18). They fail to present the American past "as a story in which people of many different backgrounds have joined together to become one nation, all Americans" (Ravitch 1990:18).

Richard Brookhiser, a senior editor of *The National Review*, has also expressed dismay over what Ravitch refers to as an obsession with particularism. He calls it "group-mindedness," which, in his estimation, "is the enemy of the understanding of rights that shaped American law and American habits" (Brookhiser 1991:147). To this destructive tendency he opposes "civic-mindedness," which should be asserted by means of a return "to a new WASP world" (Brookhiser 1991:147). Brookhiser invokes White Anglo-Saxon Protestant values as constituting the essence of America. Contending that those values have declined in the last sixty years, he calls for the renewed centrality of White Anglo-Saxon Protestants in American politics, education, and morals: "they have an obligation to offer themselves as leaders and they will be accepted" (Brookhiser 1991:153). His certainty lies in the understanding that "America was created by what are now known, for lack of a better term, as white Anglo-Saxon Protestants. They wrote the rules; everyone else played by them." If America had been settled and founded by others, he reasons, "it would be a different place now. And a worse one" (Brookhiser 1991:16). There is something admirable in Brookhiser's candid dis-

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course. In advocating the continued hegemony of his people in the United States, he does not seek to shroud his words with the veil of humanistic sounding rhetoric. One would wish Ravitch to acknowledge the presuppositions informing her view as overtly as Brookhiser does. Instead, she presents herself as an advocate of a multiculturalism which differs from that of the proponents of a revised curriculum only in that it is more unitarian. She posits that if we do not "try to understand that part of our national history in which different groups competed, fought, suffered, but ultimately learned to live together in peace and even achieved a sense of common nationhood," we risk rekindling old feuds (Ravitch 1990:18). We should be particularly concerned about this because, as she explains, "throughout history, the clash of different cultures, races, ethnic groups, and religions has usually been and is still today the cause of bitter hatred, civil war, and international war" (Ravitch 1990:18).

It is odd, indeed, to hear a historian of education object to curricular changes on the grounds that they would amount to politicizing the curriculum. For the terms of the objection would insinuate that the curriculum, as it is, somehow consists of suprapolitical, absolute categories which have come into being unmediated by political concerns. But one hardly needs to make a case to show that the received categories of the curriculum are artificial constructs conceived as vehicles to promote specific social projects and objectives (Aronowitz and Giroux 1991:96, Giroux 1981:48). "For what is a curriculum but a design for controlling and shaping the minds of the young?" an education scholar would ask (Postman 1979:38). The curriculum is not innocent, nor can it be. Decisions regarding what our students should learn, and how, for instance, the past should be taught are pregnant with political implications. Serious scholars today have little trouble admitting that. Even decisions regarding the treatment of scientific knowledge will have political implications. "A racist society will have a racist science," affirms Robert M. Young (1987:18). Recent approaches have shed considerable light on "the socially contingent nature of science production and validation" (Toren 1988:4).

As a teacher, one may choose to emphasize the role of people of color as "the original innovators of mathematics and science" (Anderson

1991:16) or to present science as a "distinctly European" phenomenon, and to glorify it as "a powerful agency in the recent and continuing rise of Western culture to a position of World dominance" (Richter 1972:3). Certainly, in either of these pedagogical options the teacher will follow the dictates of his or her "hidden curriculum," which will not lie outside the realm of the political (Giroux 1983:47). At any rate, one could probably aspire to and perhaps achieve the construction of a curriculum in which the degrees of manipulation and coercion are significantly reduced, but even that would not make it apolitical. Professor Ravitch would be more convincing on this point if she recognized and acknowledged her own ideological assumptions. She could then honestly and overtly seek to show that the political premises contained in the curriculum as it stands are more meritorious than those being advanced by the educational reformers to whom her disparaging critique is addressed. But to construe the curriculum as an a political, disinterested entity is outright deceptive.

A similar deception is contained in Professor Ravitch's charge against those who, as she says, want "to have the past taught their way." For that would seem to suggest that she knows of a system which teaches the past in a purely neutral way. More skeptical individuals would say that the past is always taught in someone's way, that is, a way that seeks to influence present conditions. Let us just say — for the sake of brevity — that one's perception of the past is inextricably linked to one's present position in a given social structure. For instance, "westering," as Grandfather in John Steinbeck's "The Leader of the People" calls the process of expanding the frontiers of white settlements in America, is naturally perceived as a nation-building epic by the descendants of the pioneers. The same occurrence, however, produces a threnody of devastation and depatriation when recalled by the descendants of the Native Americans who lost their homeland and their freedom to the invading hordes. The colonizer and the colonized, the master and the slave, the conqueror and the conquered do not experience history identically and cannot, therefore, tell it in the same way.

The presentation of American history as a felicitous fable featuring diverse groups working together to produce the harmonious mosaic we have now, enabling us to "live together in freedom and peace," is as spurious regarding the past as it is regarding the present. The words of Regent Adelaide Sanford come in handy here. She has said: "We haven't faced our divisive past. Our country's history is full of incidents about which only one story has been told. We've emphasized the similarities and commonalities, which doesn't ensure that the harsh realities have been acknowledged" (Sanford 1991:8). Far from eliminating conflicts and curing hurts, obscuring the disharmony of interracial relations in America might very well contribute to accentuating the division. David Nicholson, editor for the *Washington Post Book World* and ideological ally of Ravitch, has complained against the proponents of "inclusion" for their "intentionally" exaggerating differences, which, he believes, "seems likely to exacerbate racial and ethnic tension" (Nicholson 1990:15). But one can paint a more positive picture of the curricular movement that wishes to acknowledge difference. One can construe the recognition of difference as a prerequisite to unity. One might say, in keeping with Sanford's suggestion, that our hope lies precisely in our ability to face the crude reality: "We must confront our past in order to transcend it, recognize our wounds in order to heal them" (Sanford 1991:8).

VII. A RACIAL VIEW OF HISTORY

One should not be trapped by the odd logic for which recognizing division breeds division. Ravitch says one should not repeat what she sees as a pattern in human interaction through the centuries: namely racial and religious clash as the cause of bitter hatred and war. In expressing such a warning, Ravitch lays bare the essence of her philosophy of history. For her, clashes between peoples occur due to differences of race, religion, and culture among the belligerents. In other words, wars are brought on by intangibles, such as forms of worship and skin coloration, not by such concrete motives as territorial expansion, the need for cheap labor and natural resources, hunger for new markets, and antagonism between competing modes of production, as many respectable thinkers would now propose. In the end, of course, Ravitch is entitled to her chosen creed as the source of human conflict, disregards class struggle and material interests as important movers in history. What is outright objectionable is her attempt to have us accept her intangibles as the only scheme bearing explanatory power. If anything, her view of history would sound ludicrous to anyone used to the more complex explanations which tend to allude to economic and political variables far more than to her somewhat mystical categories. Worse still, her scheme would seem to construe racist ideology as a constant of human history rather than a relatively recent and an economically and politically explainable phenomenon, whose origins, as we shall see, can be traced neatly to the rise of Western colonialism.

For Ravitch, the movie *Glory* exemplifies beautifully the sort of multiculturalism that she is prepared to favor. And it is not surprising. The movie, just like the form of curricular pluralism she advocates, highlights the presence of blacks in the Civil War while leaving unchallenged traditional assumptions about that historical event. Blacks can feel good because a certain degree of dignity is restored to them by showing their ancestors in the role of courageous warriors. Whites, on the other hand, retain their function as ultimate initiators of action. The movie subscribes to the old notion that the war happened for the sake of the slaves. The movie shows that America wanted to rid itself of the opprobrious institution and sings the virtues of the "whites who gave their lives to the cause of black freedom" (Ravitch 1990: 18). The most intransigently anti-white slave in the movie is tamed precisely when the character played by Morgan Freeman reminds him of the many white men who are dying for him. Such an interpretation is important to the proponents of American history as a felicitous fable because it helps to offset the evil one might find in the slavery period. The shedding of white people's blood on behalf of black slaves during the secession war actually serves as a votive payment for their previous injustice, thus cleansing the white American soul of any trace of historical guilt. A critic attacking what he saw as the anti-white feeling in Richard Wright's novel *Native Son* put it succinctly in 1940 when he, denying blacks in the United States any ground for crying injustice, said:

> Mr. Wright seems to have completely forgotten the unparalleled phenomenon — unique in the world's history — of the... American Civil War, in which millions of

> white men fought and killed one another over the issue of the black slave. If it be granted that the original enslavement of Negroes was a crime against justice, then it must also be granted that its bloody expiation was filled with enough death and destruction to satisfy even the most hate-consumed Negro (Cohn 1978:59).

The more current and more historiographically sophisticated approaches to the study of the Civil War have long abandoned the interpretation advanced by Ravitch, the critic just cited, and the movie *Glory*. Economically minded historians would contend that the issue of slavery was incidental — not essential — to the conflict between North and South. The two sides did not fight over moral variables but over economic and political ones. The war dramatized a clash between competing modes of production, the industrial North and the agricultural South (Wolf 1982:308), which needed to be harmonized by subordinating one to the other. Secession would have kept America from assuming a vigorous political presence among the nations of the capitalist world. The idea was to save the union, with the slavery issue having only tangential importance.

President Abraham Lincoln, the very man who signed the document emancipating black slaves, declared his noncommittal position regarding those who were in bondage. Writing in August 1862, he answered a critical editorial by Horace Greeley with these words:

> If there be those who would not save the Union, unless they could at the same time *save* slavery, I do not agree with them. If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time *destroy* slavery, I do not agree with them. My paramount object in this struggle *is* to save the Union, and is *not* either to save or to destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing *any* slave, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing *all* the slaves, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that (Lincoln 1953:388).

The venerable Lincoln did not present himself as the champion of black freedom. Nor did he see the war as a crusade against slavery. He said: "What I do about slavery, and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save the Union; and what I forbear, I forbear because I do *not* believe it would help the Union" (Lincoln 1953:388). Of course, it would be futile to think that those who read the old moral mission into the Civil War will change their minds. As Max Planck had occasion to realize, a new truth does not become established because it persuades its opponents, "but rather because its opponents eventually die, and a new generation grows up that is familiar with it" (Planck 1949:34). Our fear, however, is that by seeking to officialize their interpretation through the school curriculum, Ravitch and the traditionalists threaten to perpetuate the currency of their views in the minds of our young into the future.

As an example of the right kind of multicultural curriculum, Professor Ravitch offers the California History-Social Science Framework, which she herself helped to write. She recommends it as an antithetical alternative to the presumably damaging orientation of projects such as the New York task force's *A Curriculum of Inclusion*. While in her view the task force members aim to use history as an instrument for instilling filiopietism, "excessive reverence for one's ancestors," the California curriculum is guided by the principle that "the role of the teacher is to teach children to think critically" (Ravitch 1990:46). Thus students in the California curriculum learn that "American society is now and has always been pluralistic and multicultural," and they are expected to understand that "true patriotism celebrates the moral force of the American idea as a nation that unites as one people the descendants of many cultures, races, religions, and ethnic groups" (Ravitch 1990:19).

Whether training the minds of our young by means of the sanitized, harmonious, and placid picture of the American experience that is perceptible in the above statements will encourage critical thinking is to be doubted seriously. The idea of national identity favored in the California curriculum seems desirable as a dogma of what America ought to become, but it is hard to accept as a picture of what America "is now and has always been." I would propose that inculcating such a view of the American past in our students is disabling. Such a mindset keeps students from developing a truly historical perspective on their own lives, without which no critical attitude can develop. Instead of promoting critical thinking, the hyperharmonious vision of America taught by the California curriculum has the potential for stunting our students' ability to analyze the present. If they are taught that the past has been harmonious and free of social and ethnic conflict, they might have no other choice but to conclude that certain groups are at the bottom of the social ladder simply because that is where they belong. If they are led to believe that America has always been multicultural and pluralistic, students might have trouble explaining the absence of certain ethnic groups at the highest managerial and decision-making posts and might be induced into reasoning that the discrepancy has to do with one group being innately more capable than another. If they learn that we have a history marked by the celebration of ethnic differences, they might be at a loss to understand present ethnic tension in our urban centers. Worse still, they might think that such nefarious feelings as racism are unexplainable elements of human nature. Racial discrimination, then, would become something that people simply do, not a social construction with a historically identifiable beginning which, if understood clearly, may perhaps be socially dismantled.

VIII. CONSTRUCTION OF THE RACIAL IMAGINATION

Our students need a curriculum that puts them in contact with the historical roots of present social ills. Their ability and courage to devise corrective measures and to participate creatively in the construction of a better world will depend on that. To address the problem of racism, for instance, our students need to avail themselves of the analytical tools with which to understand that phenomenon: how it came about and what are some of the preconditions for neutralizing its effects. For that, of course, they will have to contend with an intellectual tradition, the Western heritage, that is pervaded by what may be called the racial imagination. We are now familiar with the lengths to which scholars have gone to measure the physical features which give people a racial identity. The compulsion was triggered, as Martin Bernal shows, by a German professor in Göttingen who in the eighteenth century invented the categories of racial types (Bernal 1987:27-8, 340). The classifications of dolichocephalic, mesocephalic, and brachyocephalic became respectable elements of craniological studies. How insidiously sophisticated racial measurements would get is clear in the 1815 text by Thomas Jefferson in which he concocts an intricate mathematical formula to define a mulatto (Jefferson, 1943:1022-23). At the turn of the century, books proving the superiority of one people over others — like Edmond Desmolins's *Anglo-Saxon Superiority* (1898:307-43) — could become instant international bestsellers. In 1926, a book written ostensibly to combat Nordic ideology of racial superiority not only accepts the idea of a racial basis to civilization but explains "the assumption of racial superiority" as "a natural expression of group consciousness," which leads to group solidarity and ultimately "serves the magnificent purposes of elevating the ego and of sharpening to a fighting edge attitudes of heroic devotion" (Hankins 1926:33). According to this book, thinking of others as racially inferior is not only natural, but it is also a noble and constructive impulse. Other scholars while recognizing the ignoble and destructive dimension of racism have preserved the view of the phenomenon as a natural — and therefore inevitable — drive.

As a sophomore in college I read a book on Freudian psychology in which I learned that among the characteristics of the *Id* is the tendency to produce "a distorted form of thinking which is called *predicate thinking*." The author illustrated his point by means of the following example: "Race prejudice is often due to predicate thinking. Because Negroes are dark-skinned and because darkness is associated with wickedness and dirt, Negroes are thought of as being bad and dirty" (Hall 1954:40). The example seems innocent enough. It comes in the middle of a passage that purports to explain the dynamics of human personality in the writings of Freud. But it has serious implications for black readers. For it insinuates that blacks either do not have a human personality, since they are portrayed not as percipients but as objects of perception, or that they have an *Id* that causes them to look at themselves with disgust. Also, by construing anti-black racism as emanating from the very structure of the human mind, the author puts it outside the realm of the social and the politically soluble. So, the "dilemma," which Gunnar Myrdal spoke of when he perceived a clash between the "American Creed" of high morality and "groups prejudice" against racial and other groups becomes a characteristic of the human spirit, not a tangible material problem of society (Myrdal 1962:lxxi). If, however, we put aside the analysis of the soul and opt to look at concrete historical experience, we find otherwise. We find, among other things, that anti-black racism did not exist before 1492.

Frank Snowden's *Blacks in Antiquity* offers ample documentation to show that anti-black prejudice as it has been known to the West in the last few hundred years was alien to the world of the ancient Greeks and Romans (Snowden 1970:217). In the period known as the European Middle Ages, whites did not seem to view blacks with contempt as a racial group. Basil Davidson cites prominent cases, such as the black St. Maurice at Magdeburg and the many African allies who joined the Christian host during the Crusades, to show the absence of racist feeling in early Europe (Davidson 1984:45). The British historian Arnold Toynbee also looked at early Europe and found that "our Western race-feeling...was unknown in our Western Society in earlier times," arguing that when early European thinkers sought to divide mankind, they did not appeal to a racial division "into White people and Colored people," but a religious one, "into Christians and Heathens," and he illustrates the relaxed attitude of the ancients toward racial difference by reminding us, *inter alia*, that "medieval Western artists used to portray one of the three Magi as a Negro" (Toynbee 1935, I:223-4).

Even when black slaves are first brought into Europe in 1444 by the Portuguese captains of Henry the Navigator, there is no indication of any color or race consciousness defining the interaction of masters and slaves. Indeed upon acquiring their freedom many blacks are known to have mixed with other elements of the population and eventually merged (Editors 1979:859). In Spain there developed whole communities made up of freed blacks, and many even rose to positions of prominence in civil, military, and other governmental posts (Phillips 1985:162-63). As the association between slavery and blackness is so pervasive in the minds of our students, particular care should be taken to give them access to part of the long history of slavery from time immemorial throughout the world. They ought to see that slavery in antiquity was never a racial institution but primarily ar conomic one.

The Old Testament is filled with instances of slavery. The Decalogue, to name only one text, tells us not to covet our neighbor's wife, nor his cattle, nor his slaves, either the male or female slaves. Ancient Greece, China, India, Japan, Rome, the Mayas, Aztecs, the ancient Slavs, all had slaves. The condition under which people became slaves ranged from military defeat, to abduction, to mere poverty. Slavery befell an individual due to economic and political circumstances. Escalation of Roman slavery from the 3rd century B.C. onwards corresponds to a proportional growth in agricultural enterprises and certain forms of industry requiring numerous hands (Yavetz 1988:8). There was no specifically racial distinction made between master and slave. Nor was it unusual for Greek to enslave Greek, for Hebrew to enslave Hebrew, for Christian to enslave Christian (Editors 1979:856-7). In Russia, for instance, during the period from the mid-fifteenth to the early eighteenth centuries "a majority of the slaves were ethnically Russian" (Hellie 1982:715). Slavery does not become racially conscious until after 1492, when Columbus crosses the Atlantic and opens the veins of the Americas to the carrion birds of European soldiers, businessmen, and priests, ushering in the era of Western colonialism and its attendant escort, racist ideology.

Modern anti-black feeling in America and elsewhere in the Western world is a direct offspring of plantation economy. Pedro Mir, the revered Dominican poet and historian, traces it precisely to 1516, the year when, on the Island of Hispaniola, a Spaniard by the name of Velosa endeavored to accomplish the first successful crop in a New World plantation (Mir 1978:183). What made this successful enterprise so fateful was that it employed not merely slaves but specifically black slaves. At the beginning of the colonial project in the New World slave workers, as Eric Williams reminds us, were "brown, white, black, and yellow, Catholic, Protestant, and pagan" (Williams 1944:7). Slavery was color-blind. After Velosa's successful experiment, however, a lugubrious connection is made in the minds of those investing in the economic enterprise between blackness and plantation work. Thus, when in 1518 the Hispaniola colonists request official permission from the Spanish crown to import more servile workers, the language of their missive no longer speaks vaguely of *slaves*. It is rather clear in its specification: they need permission "to bring Negroes, a race robust for labor" (Williams 1961:9; Mir 1978:195). The institution, then, acquired a distinct color. In other parts of the Americas, as in the United States, the equation between blackness and slavery occurred later, but if eventually did occur wherever the plantation became a significant component of the colony's economy. The Middle Passage emerged as a central feature of Western development. Africa then became the site par excellence of bonded labor. The most massive uprooting known to humankind started. The deaths of Emmett Till in the 1950s and Yusef Hawkins in the 1980s, and the cruel beating of Rodney King in the 1990s can be traced in a direct line of descent back to Velosa's successful experiment in the 1516 Hispaniola plantation.

Economic advantage led to the construction of slavery as a racial institution, something it had never been before. The equation between slavery and race, consequently, necessitated a racist ideology, something slavery had never required before. It is at this historical conjuncture that the West begins to deploy its intellectual machinery to explain and justify territorial expansionism, enslavement of other peoples, conquest, and colonization in terms of a theory of racial superiority. The racial ideology would reach its most strident tone in the late nineteenth century, when Western colonialism spreads its tentacles around the globe and the division of mankind between white and colored, which Toynbee tells us was alien to the medieval European mind, penetrates the very cortex of Western psyche.

Lord Acton, who is otherwise known for his devotion to the defense of civil liberties, would mouth words like the following: "The Persians, the Greeks, the Romans, and the Teutons are the only makers of history, the only authors of advancement. Other races...are a negative element in the world; sometimes the barrier, sometimes the instrument, sometimes the materials of those races to whom it is given to originate and to advance" (Williams 1964:110). For his part, the prominent French thinker Ernest Renan, author of a memorable biography of Jesus Christ, published in 1871 *La Réforme intellectuelle et morale*, a book which proposes that nature has made a race of workers (the Chinese), a race of land laborers (the blacks), and a race of masters and soldiers (the whites). "Let everyone do that for which nature has endowed him, and all will be well," he says (Renan 1921:200-01). "Also, there is nothing odd about the conquest of a country of an inferior race by a superior race that goes there to govern it," says Renan, citing the case of English colonization of India, which, in his view, resulted in "a great advantage to India, to humanity in general, and to England" (Renan 1921:199)

IX. RACE AND WESTERN THOUGHT

The predominance of the racial principle in the intellectual tradition of the West creates a serious problem in Professor Ravitch's curricular scheme. For, on the one hand, she claims to recognize and respect the racial and cultural diversity of the United States, while, on the other, she must invoke the Western tradition as the basis for the commonality we all share. Above we quoted her presenting the Western tradition as "the set of moral and political values" that enables us "in all our diversity, to live together in freedom and peace" (Ravitch 1990:20). Yet a more critical reading of the Western tradition would uncover an intellectual legacy largely devoted to the praise of colonial conquerors and to the detraction of non-white, conquered peoples. The British historian Lord Macaulay, in a speech directed against those educators in colonial India who favored the inclusion of native culture in the curriculum, compared the cultural traditions of the colonizer and the colonized in these terms: "a single shelf of a good European library [is] worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia," and he could not see how the cultural legacy "of a nation comparatively ignorant" like India could be preferred over that of "a nation of high intellectual attainments" like England (Macaulay 1952:722-725).

In "The White Man's Burden," the well-known poem appearing in Rudyard Ripling's *The Five Nations* (1903), the people inhabiting what came to be called the Third World are characterized as "new-caught, sullen peoples/Half-devil and half-child" (Kipling 1924,xxi:78). Written in 1898 à propos of the American military involvement in Cuba, the poem urges the United States to assume control of that country's destiny. A critic commenting on the poem in 1914 celebrated the rightness of Kipling's imperial vision. He judged that it was right for America to accept her "imperial responsibility and charge herself with the care of the semi-civilized islands that she had wrested from Spain" (Durand, 1971:229). And even today, in the most recent edition of the *Britannica*, a biographer deems Kipling's imperialist persuasions correct, since "they were bound up with a genuine sense of a civilizing mission that required every Englishman, or, more broadly, every white man, to bring European culture to the heathen natives of the uncivilized world" (Stewart 1979). This indicates that imperial ethnocentrism is very much alive in the Western mind. The West, indeed, finds it difficult to celebrate its achievement other than by invoking the genius of the race and brandishing ethnic dichotomies. One need only read the first stanza of an epic poem published in London in 1984, celebrating the virtues of the Western heritage, to ascertain the currency of the racial imagination:

> Oft has the fragile but resilient bloom
> Of world advance, civility and grace
> And liberalness and courtesy and charm
> Stirred up the envious hatred of some race
> That living, as it were, in the next room
> And, with an uncluttered view, has sought to harm
> What it itself could never emulate (Tower 1984:7).

In so far as the West has tended to define itself in terms of racial superiority, it is difficult to see how non-whites can recognize themselves as natural heirs of the Western tradition. Blacks, for instance, following their successful insertion in New World plantation economy have had to withstand the intellectual offensive of the West for centuries. From the tirade of J.H. Heidegger, a seventeenth century Protestant theologian from Munich, who adduced biblical evidence to show that they, as direct descendants of Ham, were the bearers of a heavenly curse and were fated to remain eternally in bondage (Franco 1975:13), to the Cuban ethnologist Fernando Ortiz who in the early twentieth century, following European theories of criminality and genetics, attributed to them the origin of most criminal and immoral behavior on the island, blacks have sustained systematic dehumanization and inferiorization coming from virtually all quarters of Western intellectual discourse (Ortiz 1975:27-8; 1973:20). Since Christianity teaches that we are all equal under God, and since modern slavery was spurred primarily by Christian nations, Western thinkers had to show blacks as less than human or wrestle with the agony of religious contradiction. One can thus understand why it seemed so imperative for so many Western intellectuals to reaffirm the belief in black inferiority.

One remembers, for instance, that the 1776 Declaration of Independence of the United States omitted the anti-slavery clause whereby the bondage of the blacks is blamed on King George III's "cruel war against human nature itself, violating its most sacred rights of life and liberty" (Declaration 1989:111). If the revolutionary leaders could not bring themselves to include blacks in the dictum that "all men are created equal," one can understand, then, why the 1787 United States Constitution should define blacks as being worth only "three fifths" of a person, and why it should extend the period of slave import by 20 years, as we learn in Article I of that important document for the history of human suffrage (Constitution 1989:114). Jefferson had no trepidation about declaring the mental inferiority of blacks. He found them wanting in the capacity for reflection. In his *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1784), he speaks of the strictly carnal nature of their romantic impulses: "love seems with them to be more an eager desire, than a tender, delicate mixture of sentiment and sensation....In general their existence appears to participate more of sensation than reflection" (Jefferson 1944:257). To further illustrate their incapacity for elevated thought, Jefferson refers to the absence among the slaves of a refined poetic tradition, overlooking, it appears, their systematic dehumanization, their lack of even the most rudimentary schooling, and the fact that teaching a slave even as little as the letters of the alphabet often constituted a serious crime. Jefferson puts it in these words: "Misery is often the parent of the most affecting touches in poetry. Among the blacks is misery enough, God knows, but no poetry. Love is the peculiar oestrum of the poet. Their love is ardent, but it kindles the senses only, not the imagination. Religion, indeed, has produced a Phillis Whately [sic]; but it could not produce a poet. The compositions published under her name are below the dignity of criticism" (Jefferson 1944:258-59).

It matters little that Jefferson, a key figure of the Enlightenment and one of the principle architects of American democracy, had a black mistress and that he probably loved her dearly. His opinion of blacks was consistent with the ideology of the ruling classes in America and elsewhere in the West. Philosophers of the caliber of Immanuel Kant and David Hume did not fail to pronounce themselves on the inferiority of blacks (Kant, cited in Gates 1988:141; Hume 1963:213). G.W.F. Hegel, perhaps the most influential of nineteenth century Western philosophers, whose ideas have had repercussions as a source for both idealist and materialist schools of thought, went as far as to deny blacks a space in the history of mankind. He posited that blacks, who had created nothing, had no sense of honor and lacked an idea of God. They could thus be omitted from the chronicle of human history, he says in his *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*. Hegel's logic, however, could not rise in the deprecation of blacks to the same intellectual sophistication it reached when explicating the law of dialectics. Here is an example: Hegel recalls the fearless boldness with which Africans often resisted the military advance of the colonizer and allowed "themselves to be shot down by thousands in war with Europeans," but instead of seeing that action as a manifestation of authentic courage and heroic immolation to the cause of freedom, he interprets it negatively as "contempt for humanity" and "want of regard for life" (Hegel 1956:96). Similarly, Jefferson, in describing the valor of blacks, found them to be "at least as brave" as and a bit "more adventuresome" than whites, but, he reasoned, "this may perhaps proceed from a want of forethought, which prevents their seeing a danger till it be present" (Jefferson 1944:257).

In other words, even the same qualities that in whites constituted virtues, became transformed in the minds of Western thinkers into irrefutable proof of inferiority when found in blacks. The distinguished English novelist Anthony Trollope, looking at blacks in the West Indies wrote in 1860 thus: "I do not deny their family attachments, but is the attachment of a dog. We have all had dogs whom we have well used, and have prided in their fidelity." The animality of their feelings had to do with the fact that those "dear brutes," as Trollope affectionately called blacks, lacked the capacity for the purer human emotions (Trollope 1985:46). He sadly feared that their emancipation, which had occurred in the West Indies some twenty five years earlier, would cause blacks to "recede from civilization and become again savages," convinced as he was that: "These people are a servile race, fitted by nature for the hardest physical work, and apparently at present fitted for nothing else" (Trollope 1985:48). The idea of the deleterious effect that freedom could have on blacks rested on the belief that, as the English scholar James Anthony Froude put it, "they have shown no capacity to rise above the condition of their ancestors except under European authority to keep them from making war on one another" (Froude 1888:287).

How, precisely, the condition of black people's African ancestors was understood by the West at the time was perhaps expressed most succinctly by Sir Richard Burton, one of the greatest scholar-explorers of nineteenth century England, to whom we owe, among other things, a lovely unexpurgated translation of the *Arabian Nights*. In 1860, upon reaching the shores of lake Tanganyika, which he presumably "discovered," Burton wrote in his diary about the "rudimentary mind" of the Negro. Insisting on the "total incapacity for improvement" characterizing the black race, he typified it as belonging "to one of those childish races which, never rising to Man's estate, fall like worn out links from the great chain of animated nature" (Davidson 1984:15). Five years later, the British explorer Sir Samuel Baker, who had traveled to the uppermost reaches of the Nile, addressed the London Ethnographical Society and reported on the Dinka peoples whom he had seen there. He found them to be in a state inferior to that of animals and with a nature "not even to be compared with the noble character of the dog," and he emphatically presented them as a deplorable species, having "neither gratitude, pity, love or self-denial" (Davidson 1984:49).

As the natural condition of blacks was taken to be one of inferior savagery and spiritual and psychological primitiveness, it normally followed in dominant Western discourse that colonizing them in Africa and enslaving them in the Americas amounted to a humanitarian service. As Hegel and Froude had unequivocally postulated, in their subjection to white domination lay black people's only hope of rising to the level of humanity. The venerable David Livingstone, indefatigable traveler, Christian missionary, and also reputed "discoverer," among other things, of Victoria Falls in the Zambezi region, succinctly articulated the prevalent view of Western colonialism as a benevolent mission. He described the European incursion into Africa and domination of its lands and peoples in these terms:

> We come among them as members of a superior race, and servants of a Government that desires to elevate the more degraded portions of the human family. We are adherents to a benign holy religion, and may, by consistent conduct and wise patient efforts, become harbingers of peace to a hitherto distracted and down-trodden race (Davidson 1984:170).

Similarly, whenever it became necessary to combat the ideas of those radicals who at different times advocated either emancipation of the slaves or liberation of the colonies, the conservative discourse tended to portray the colonial transaction as an epic of self-denial and creation. Thus, in "The Nigger Question" (1849), Thomas Carlyle invoked all the "European heroism" that "had to spend itself in obscure battle" in the jungles of the West Indies before the land and the people there could be tamed and made productive. He recalled that "the bones of many thousand British men had to be laid" before the soil of Jamaica could be made to yield (Carlyle 1980:376-77). His understanding of the sacrifice the British had to make to possess the West Indian colonies made the talk of emancipation utterly unacceptable to him. His position is clear when he emphatically declares: "Not an inch of soil in those fruitful Isles, purchased by British blood, shall any black man hold to grow pumpkins for him, except on terms that are fair towards Britain" (Carlyle 1980:377). His biographer, the above cited Froude, not only subscribed to Carlyle's conservative view, but he also attacked the proponents of "Negro emancipation," whose radical agitation had brought nothing but "the material ruin of colonies once the most precious we had, and the moral ruin of the blacks themselves, who were rotting away in sensuous idleness amidst the wrecks of the plantations" (Froude 1979:485).

One cannot separate these pronouncements from the Western tradition that Professor Ravitch wishes us to uphold as the great unifier and the great equalizer among the diverse elements that make up American society. We cannot uncritically undertake a curricular construction that presents the West as the common cultural ground we all share without practicing a measure of deception. A significant portion of Western intellectual discourse has been invested precisely in conceptualizing the perceived intellectual superiority of the white race and the systematic inferiorization of the conquered peoples. The elevation of the racial principle has been central to Western thought. I am saying, in effect, that the legacy of unarguably racist ideologues such as Count Arthur de Gobineau and the above cited Renan are only pernicious exaggerations of an element that has been a constant ingredient of the Western intellectual tradition. Gobineau, who placed blacks "at the foot" of the human "ladder," denying that they had ever initiated any civilization or that they even possessed mental faculties, stated categorically that: "all civilizations derive from the white race, that none can exist without its help, and that a society is great and brilliant only in so far as it preserves the blood of the noble group that created it" (Gobineau 1967:205, 210).

But Gobineau did not invent the terms of his discourse. He came after — not before — the likes of Hume, Kant, Hegel, and Jefferson. His ideas, which influenced thinkers of the stature of Friedrich Nietzsche and artists of the prominence of Richard Wagner, became notorious not because they were unique but because of their zeal. They offered the most forceful and sustained conceptualization of the vibrant racial principle until then produced in the West. He did not start the tradition of racist ideology. Nor did he mark its end. Close to six decades after Gobineau's four-volume essay on the natural inequalities of human races (1853-1855), the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*'s eleventh edition, in an article penned by British Museum anthropologist Thomas Athol Joyce, affirmed that: "Mentally the negro is inferior to the white" (Joyce 1911:344). Almost two decades after Joyce, University of London Professor Sir Grofton Elliot Smith wrote a scholarly book that testified that: "The Negro is a very primitive member of the human family," having produced no "significant element of culture" and showing an utter "lack of enterprise and initiative" (Smith 1929:122,137). Perhaps that the English version of

Gobineau's essay reappeared in a new, revised edition, with a thoroughly laudatory introduction by the Nietzsche scholar Oscar Levy, in 1967, suggests that, even this late in the game, a market existed which gave currency to such forcefully racist ideas.

It is fair to say, then, that despite Professor Ravitch's unitarian aspirations, black students cannot easily have a harmonious relationship with the Western intellectual tradition unless one succeeds in concealing from them the fact that a major portion of that tradition has been directed against them. The systematic inferiorization affects other people of color differently but only in degree, depending on the specific configuration of their colonial relationship with the master race. For instance, in the United States, the debate over the annexation of Puerto Rico, following the American invasion of 1898, is enlightening. It shows with painful clarity that those who urged the United States to keep the island portrayed Puerto Ricans in terms as disparaging as those used by the ones arguing the opposite. Senator Albert J. Beveridge, advocating annexation, appealed to the American imperial responsibility to "administer government among savages and senile peoples." Tennessee Senator Bate, objecting to annexation, referred contemptuously to the idea of incorporating into the citizenry a people with such undefinable ethnicity as the Puerto Ricans, a "heterogeneous mass of mongrels," and insisted that the U.S. should not seek to rule over "peoples incapable of self-government, over religions hostile to Christianity, and over savages addicted to headhunting and cannibalism, as some of these islanders are" (cited in Maldonado-Denis 1972:56, 88).

With that background in mind, students whose ancestry is anywhere in the Third World, regions that have been colonized and debased by the West, will not attain the ability to think critically unless they work out in their minds a critique of the Western tradition and succeed in placing the centrality of the West and its attendant racialist ideology in historical perspective. Conceding this historical dissonance between peoples of color and the West does not amount to wanting "to teach people that the contributions of Western culture are not valid," as Jeanne Allen has alleged (cited in Nicholson 1991:15). On the contrary, only by critically dissecting their disparity — viewing it as the direct result of measurable historical happenings — will students of color succeed in avoiding essentialist interpretations of Western supremacist attitudes. They need to undertake such a critique also lest they should — indulging in racialist reasoning themselves — attribute to baser souls and meaner morals white people's insistence on lifting racial banners to the detriment of peoples of color. For that would be to appeal to intangibles for explanations of concrete historical experience. The recurrence of ethnically deprecatory discourse in the Western intellectual legacy has to do with specific historical conjunctures. White thinkers have not invested so many pages in the affirmation of their racial superiority because they have been *naturally* racist and evil. There is an equally long — albeit marginal — tradition of white thinkers who have not espoused racialist ideas. Those who have concocted racialist ideologies have done so because the rise of the West occurred in the context of colonialism, an enterprise that entailed the conquest and domination of people from other races and cultures.

Above we saw that the successful use of black slaves in plantation economy in the New World bred an anti-black discourse that had never existed before. The conquest and plunder of the Americas and Africa, places inhabited by racially different peoples, gave a few Christian nations of Europe a centrality they had never enjoyed in world affairs. Janet Abu-Lughod shows, for instance, that by 1300 A.D. Europe was not only "very much part of the periphery" in the world economic order prevailing at the time but that there were "great variations in the European periphery" (Abu-Lughod 1989:13-14). But a few centuries later, the leading European nations not only had learned to see themselves cohesively as members of a cultural, racial, and political unit, as the West, but their supremacy had become established. They did so thanks to the profit exacted from their subjection of lands and peoples overseas. The rise of the West to a position of prominence in world affairs, by virtue of its culturally and racially divisive circumstances, could not help but to separate mankind into white and colored peoples, the categories that so annoyed Toynbee. The awareness of these categories imbued Western discourse with a deep sense of racial self-consciousness from its very inception. The emergence of racialist ideology occurs in this historical context.

X. RISE OF THE WEST AS PROGRESS OF THE HUMAN MIND

Also resulting from the same historical juncture — and perhaps inseparable from the view of the inherent superiority of the master race — is the tendency to construct a narrative in which the West occupies the core of human culture from the beginning of time. A genealogy emerges that traces Western culture back to the ancient Greeks in an uninterrupted line of descent, disregarding the centuries of separation that intellectually and culturally kept the ancient Hellenic world apart from the cultural and political project that became consolidated only a few centuries ago in the Christian West. The Greeks, viewed as intellectual progenitors of Western culture, became portrayed as the source of philosophy and civilization. For that, however, it was necessary to strip Greek intellectual achievement of any association with the cultural legacy of peoples of color, which the Greeks themselves had recognized abundantly. Western scholars, as Bernal shows (1987:310), developed techniques to discredit the "barbarophilia" of the ancient Greeks. The ancient Greek tradition of attributing the origin of their civilization to Aphro-asiatic roots, to peoples of non-European origin, was seen as requiring correction. Those historiographical machinations were prompted by the need to provide a genesis for the current hegemony of the West, a genesis that accorded with the then prevailing paradigm of progress induced by teleological reasoning.

History was then conceived as a chronicle of the progression of the human mind, with the attendant implication that those people with lesser control over the affairs of the world had attained less in the sphere of mind. In fact, few peoples were seen as partaking of history proper. For Max Schmidt, "the voluntary manifestations of human life outside the zones of Asiatic and European civilization" did not belong in the realm of history but of ethnology (Schmidt 1926:26-27). The sciences of ethnology and anthropology, which were begotten by the colonial expansion of the Christian West, are pervaded with the notion that equates humankind with European man, with other cultures having tangential and ancillary importance or simply being confined to the realm of primitiveness. Schmidt recounts how, in his words, the "discovery" of America "forced upon men's minds the great questions as to how the ancestors of its inhabitants had come thither, and how the ancient American civilizations were to be accounted for" (Schmidt 1926:206). One need not point out here that "men's minds" for this scholar meant strictly European minds.

Conventional wisdom sustained that "Man's progress from savagery to civilization is intimately bound up with the advance of abstract thinking, which enables him to rise above the chaos of particular sensations and to fashion therefrom an ordered cosmos" (Childe 1926:3). Informed by this wisdom, Western thinkers diagnosed large portions of humanity, in Africa, in tribes of Native America, Australia, the Pacific, etc., as lacking the level of abstract thinking required for civilization. Lucien Lèvy-Bruhl endeavored to demonstrate that those people, whom he called "primitive," functioned on an essentially mystic level of thought and lacked the ability to see themselves as subjects or to apprehend any distinction between themselves and physical objects around them (Lèvy-Bruhl 1966:15).

Even in the various circumstances in which Lèvy-Bruhl had to admit their "subtlety, sagacity and sophistication," he denied their mental endowment. He reasoned that they were "guided by a kind of special sense or tact" which actually could "become infallible, without having anything in common with intellectual processes, properly so called" (Lèvy-Bruhl 1923:445). The acrobatics contained in statements like this become vivid in examples such as that of Lèvy-Bruhl's reference to an Australian tribe whose members could accurately identify the footprints of each and everyone of the tribes people. The apparently prodigious memory and sharpness of observation did not astonish Lèvy-Bruhl, who interpreted them precisely as signs of a lower form of thought which favors excessive attention to detail over global generalization. Even someone who spoke sympathetically of "primitive life," Bronislaw Malinowski, revealed, in defending the people under study, the culturally and politically imperialistic nature of ethnology. He viewed ethnology as the "study of the rapidly vanishing savage races," whose importance is not only "scientific and cultural" but also "practical" insofar as "it can help the white man to govern, exploit, and 'improve' the native with less pernicious results to the latter" (Malinowski 1926:xi). In fact, even when an effort has been made, as Hoebel did, to offer a purely descriptive and unbiased definition of primitive society, the problem remains. Hoebel states that "the cultural forms of primitive societies are more similar in their general characteristics to those that presumably prevailed in the early cultures of the infancy of mankind" (Hoebel 1968:290). This definition still adheres to the notion that reserves the term mankind to designate exclusively the developed nations, retaining the insinuation of subhumanity for the other elements of the species.

Today it is common for Western scholars to disassociate themselves from the ethnocentric view that tended "to interpret all cultural phenomena in terms and categories applicable to European societies," and to denounce the arbitrariness of attempting "to evaluate very diverse cultures by references to a fixed system that was likewise derived from European tradition," as Raymond Williams puts it (1979:275). Lèvi-Strauss, among others, has shown that what may be considered modern scientific mode of thought does not represent a more nor less advanced stage in the development of the human mind as compared with the mental processes of the societies deemed "uncivilized" (Lèvi-Strauss 1966:15), but represents rather "two strategic levels at which nature is accessible to scientific enquiry." We can no longer "speak in terms of primitive and advanced," assuming that human minds differ "in their structure like machines of an earlier and later design," says Jack Goody (1977:1). Also, in recent times Western scholars seem to have attained a deeper understanding and, with it, a finer appreciation of cultures quite different from their own (White 1979:1154). Of course, the work done by Third World scholars in the effective constitution of a counter-discourse and the influence exerted by independence movements and struggles for liberation has helped considerably. Nor should we forget that abolitionist and anti-racist discourse from Western individuals has existed at least since the mid-eighteenth century (Franco 1975:63-64). Leo Frobenius, remembered among people of color for his compilations of African tales, was challenging the prevalent use of the concept of "primitive" to refer to cultures that needed to be understood in their own terms as early as the turn of the century (Frobenius 1971:11).

In the 1940s, Ruth Benedict's *Race: Science and Politics* combatted the racial principle, denouncing the idiocy of appealing to "mere germ plasm" to claim superiority. In her book Benedict appended a section entitled "Resolutions and Manifestoes of Scientists," which reproduced a series of statements by social science and biology associations repudiating racialism (Benedict 1945:94,195-99). Besides, the work of scholars — white and black — devoted to restoring to people of color the dignity so emphatically butchered by dominant Western discourse has had its undeniable effect. The erudite contributions of Edward W. Blyden, W.E.B. Dubois, Cheik Anta Diop, Carter G. Woodson, George Padmore, Melville Herskovitz, Roger Bastide, Basil Davidson, George G.M. James, Chancellor Williams, Lerone Bennett, Jr., John Henrik Clarke, Walter Rodney, Ivan Van Sertima, and others, have indeed rendered it irrational for anyone to persevere in the claim that blacks have no history, have created nothing, have lacked initiative, or have ever accepted their subjection with undue passivity. But it is unclear how much of their teachings has really become part of the curriculum in our schools. Even if one could claim that most Western scholars today no longer subscribe to the notion of racial superiority, textbooks, encyclopedias, and curricular materials still correspond to cultural models brought into being at a time when racism was rampant. We cannot presume that all the discourse that was begotten by writers under the spell of the racial imagination has been revised. Nor can we assert that the narrative of human culture that draws an uninterrupted line of progress from ancient Greece to Western Europe to the United States has lost currency. One need only consult any document that generalizes from the point of view of the West about human culture, world literature, philosophy or civilization to see the Eurocentric model still vibrantly operative. Similarly, the notion that reduces human history to a celebratory chronicle of victors and conquerors, with the experience of the vanquished and the conquered being relegated to an incidental appendage of the main story, still thrives vigorously.

XI. BEYOND THE RACIAL IMAGINATION AND MANIFEST DESTINY

There has indeed been some change. Generally Western discourse no longer renders people of color inferior in overt terms. But we are far from the absolute dismantling of racism recommended by René Etiemble, who posited that "all humanism is ridiculous which does not set as its main objective the elimination of racism" (cited in Hoffmann 1973:7). Using more polite language certainly matters a great deal since it has contributed to enhanced interracial relations, but one must not overemphasize its effect. We certainly have in recent decades accrued knowledge about racial rightness, but the actual learning takes place in the sphere of "*action* against racial wrongs," as Cyril Bibby has pointed out. Bibby affirms that sharing playground space with a schoolmate of a different color can cause a child to develop a sense of racial tolerance more effectively than hearing moral statements on equality (Bibby 1960:83). And sharing space is, no doubt, hard to do, especially if one believes rightly or wrongly that such a space is limited. In the debate over the contents of the curriculum the concern over space recurs quite frequently. The proponents of the traditional curriculum often articulate their objection to the cultural diversification of school materials by using spatial metaphors. "By the time we finish satisfying all ethnic sensibilities, there might not be any room left for education," they say. There is also the problem of sharing space in the job market, which causes many whites to believe that quota stipulations really discriminate against them, or that colored colleagues got their jobs because of their skin whereas they had to prove skill and ability. Statistics tell a clear enough story, but people — black, white, or green — do not normally base their opinions on quantifiable data. They reason on the basis of prevailing notions, of the ideological schemes which have shaped their upbringing.

Granting space to hitherto rejected groups can also be construed in the dominant, conservative discourse as a sign of decay. The nostalgia for a better, healthier time is all too noticeable in the plaint of those who propose the return to the traditional curriculum. They tend to share the despair of the spokesperson who attributed the student unrest at The John Jay College of Criminal Justice in the spring of 1989 to the college's demographic deterioration, meaning "that in order to maintain enrollments, John Jay — like other New York City post-secondary educational institutions — has lowered its standards" (Kouri 1990:20). When we decode the terms of his grievance, we find that this concerned citizen is really suffering angst at the demographic changes that took place at the City University of New York when, upon the implementation of open admissions, people of color along with lower class whites gained massive entrance into the municipal higher educational system. We cannot all share the distress of those who, looking at how CUNY has changed in the last twenty years, see only decay, for that could very well hide an allusion to our presence there.

The association between race and intelligence has not disappeared from the Western imagination. In 1983, following the screening of *The Day After*, ABC aired a panel discussion to help the audience cope with the issue of nuclear warfare that was so harshly dramatized in the TV movie. The discussion, which, moderated by Ted Koppel, featured luminaries like Carl Sagan, William F. Buckley, Jr., and Elie Wiesel, revolved around the awful possibility of a real nuclear confrontation. It was said by one of the speakers that we were safe from nuclear disaster so long as nuclear bombs stayed in the hands of the United States, the Soviet Union, and the other Western powers, since among these, nuclear capability would always function as a deterrent, no one being so dumb as to initiate a war that would bring destruction for all. What we have to worry about, the speaker continued, is the chance that small Third World nations may have of developing nuclear capability, for that would really put our safety in jeopardy. The comment, which went unchallenged by the other panelists, rested on the assumption that Third World peoples lack the sound judgment of people in the industrialized nations, an assumption which goes back to the perceived mental superiority of the people of the core countries. Because of their predisposition to accept such a perception, none of the panelists remembered, it seems, that the havoc at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, where nuclear flames left a toll of hundreds of thousands of charred corpses and seared the living flesh of still larger numbers, was not wrought by a Third World nation. The West alone has shown such willingness to bring about cataclysmic destruction. Why then overlook historical fact and construe the Third World mind as the ultimate danger?

During the missile crisis in 1961 holocaust was actually in the air. Kennedy asked for an estimate of the potential loss in human life. The figure was gargantuan, and the young, handsome president was distraught, but he could not stop it, for that would have meant letting the Soviets intimidate America, which would have been disastrous. So, people in civilized America rehearsed ways of possibly surviving the nuclear conflagration. People practiced going into the fallout shelters. Children forfeited their innocence as they came into contact with the imminence of death. The character in "Snow," a story by the poet and fiction writer Julia Alvarez, recreating the emotional scenario of that dangerous moment in American history, recalls the following: "At school, we had air raid drills: an ominous bell would go off and we'd file into the hall, fall to the floor, cover our heads with our coats, and imagine our hair falling out, the bones in our arms going soft" (Alvarez 1991:166-67). Fortunately, the world-shattering collision did not come to pass. The Soviet Union, which was not as wholly identified with the Western tradition as the United States, opted to give in and removed the conflictive missiles from Cuba, thus averting the catastrophe.

The speakers at the ABC panel failed to remember that frightening event, too, occupied as their minds were with asserting the brutality of Third World peoples. I hold a grudge in particular against Weisel. For he, more than anybody else in the panel, ought to have remembered. He owes his renown and his Nobel Prize to the sensitivity with which he has chronicled the pain brought upon his people by non-Third World cruelty. As a witness to the Holocaust, he knows about genocidal destruction by fire, about files of unsuspecting humans awaiting a turn to be consumed in the baleful crematoria of German concentration camps. One wonders about the architects who designed these gigantic ovens, what architectural questions they must have had to consider: the number of bodies that would fit at any one time, the exact point at which the ashes would collect themselves as the burned bodies crumbled. Those architects were not from the Third World. Weisel ought to have remembered, if nobody else did, because the mindset that induces one to think, in the face of evidence to the contrary, that Third World people are irrational, reason being circumscribed to the West, is separated only by degrees from the self-righteousness that so coldly calculated the use of the German crematoria.

It would seem fair to say, in view of the foregoing, that the West has not yet learned the language with which to speak fairly about peoples of color. And that constitutes a major obstacle to communication between the Western heritage, as reproduced in the traditional curriculum, and the mostly non-white student population that we serve in the City University of New York. Dominant Western discourse emerged as an ancilla to a successful project of invasion and conquest. One cannot expect it to speak highly about those whose subjection it was born to justify. One must not ask it to function in accordance with principles that go counter to its very nature. Dominicans, giving currency to an old Spanish adage, would say: "you cannot get pears from an elm tree." In criticizing the advocates of a culturally diversified curriculum, Diane Ravitch, David Nicholson, Albert Shanker, Dinesh D'Souza, Arthur Schlesinger, George Will, and the like, prophesy division and inter-ethnic strife. They prescribe the traditional, Western-oriented curriculum as the basis of unity and commonality. And it figures. For Western discourse sees sharing as disruption. Only its own hegemony can guarantee social harmony. The traditionalists speak in earnest. They actually *see* the world that way, through conservative Western eyes — albeit updated and a bit sanitized by post-Civil Rights pseudo-humanistic rhetoric.

XII. INCLUSION AS ANTIDOTE TO IMPERIAL REASONING

Ultimately, though, the fear of reform and the plea for schools to return to the ways of the past may conceal a more disquieting reality. The vision of anarchy construed by the traditionalists may result from an insidious sort of nostalgia. Such a yearning for a time when school merely concerned itself with one ethnic component of the American people's experience bespeaks a desire for ethnocentric hegemony. We should fear that nostalgic leaning, which may, in effect, entail a lugubrious remnant of the doctrine of Manifest

Destiny. In the logic of that doctrine, we may recall, humanity was defined exclusively in terms of the one people in power. The consolidation of that power, which seldom occurred without perpetrating genocide against other members of the human family, was always seen as the noble attainment of a greater good in that it ensured progress, civilization, and peace. In that mindset, social harmony comes about solely through the unchallenged rule of the one chosen people.

Nor did proponents of Manifest Destiny always speak malevolent words about the people who needed to be crushed in the process of consolidation of power. On the contrary, they often expressed admiration and respect for their victims. The words of General James Carleton upon his definitive expulsion of the Navajos from their homeland, a coveted region that the Army needed to clear for white occupation, beautifully illustrate that strange sensitivity. Pondering on the depatriation of the vanquished people and the glorious land now available for the advancement of the ruling race, Carleton spoke thus:

> The exodus of this whole people from the land of their fathers is not only an interesting but a touching sight. They have fought us gallantly for years on years; they have defended their mountains and their stupendous canyons with a heroism which any people might be proud to emulate; but when, at length, they found it was their destiny, too, as it had been that of their brethren, tribe after tribe, away back toward the rising of the sun, to give way to the insatiable progress of our race, they threw down their arms, and, as brave men entitled to our admiration and respect, have come to us with confidence in our magnanimity, and feeling that we are too powerful and too just a people to repay that confidence with meanness or neglect — feeling that having sacrificed to us their beautiful country, their homes, the associations of their lives, the scenes rendered classic in their traditions, we will not dole out to them a miser's pittance in return for what they know to be and what we know to be a princely realm (Brown 1981:31).

There is poetry and goodness in Carlton's words, though not necessarily in the deeds that inspired them. It seems fair to say that we cannot accept the logic of Manifest Destiny. Through the centuries we have experienced historical phenomena which are supposed to have made us wise enough to realize that oppression backfires in the long run even if it might appear to yield short-term benefits. We should, therefore, not commiserate with those who grieve over the academic reforms that challenge or question a former order of things in America. In the proposed reforms, the traditionalists see decay and loss of permanent values. Yet, we might see in them the coming of age of multicultural America. The pangs and discomforts brought to the fore by the current debate over the curriculum simply show that growing up is hard to do.

Our students need to learn from an intellectual tradition which does not make of their humanity a point of contention. They need to refer to a cultural heritage which enables them to take their human dignity for granted. Nothing does more damage to one's character than having to prove one's humanity. They should not utterly reject the West. For, the children of colonialism, we are, inescapably, cultural mulattos. But they should understand the historical conjunctures which explain the present hegemony of the West, which they must recognize as only one of the components of their cultural heritage. They must be able to reclaim the intellectual achievement of the entire human family. They need exposure to a curriculum which does not perpetuate the myth that people first started thinking in Greece, whose legacy passed uninterruptedly to Western Europe and then to the United States. They need to see that ancient civilization, for instance, includes the legacies of Egypt, Nubia, Ethiopia, Dahomey, Volta, Timbuktu, India, Persia, Arabia, China, Japan, Indochina, other parts of Asia, and the Americas, among many others. A gathering of ancient wisdom, for example, would have to include such pieces as *The Book of the Dead*, collections of African lore, *The Mahabarata*, the *Bhagavad-Gita*, *Ramayana*, the *Shah nameh*, *The Books of Chilam Balam*, the *I-Ching*, the *Tao Te Ching*, *The Analecta*, ancient Japanese literature up to *The Tale of Genji*, Scandinavian Sagas, the *Popol-Vuh*, to name only a minute number of the most readily available texts from ancient cultures. The knowledge that the ancients where intellectually busy at work in so many different parts of the world would help students acquire a more decentralized view of human culture and civilization. The idea is that the world is a mighty big place and that the genius of the species has manifested itself in all colors, languages, and cultures throughout the globe.

A curriculum which helps our students look at humanity in all its amplitude and all its diverse creativity will, consequently, challenge current periodological subdivisions in human history. Terms such as the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, though often taken to designate general past time, are clearly culture-specific and evoke the historical experience of people in Western Europe exclusively. Those terms trigger visions of Aachen, Barcelona, Florence, Paris, Cambridge, and do not bring to mind images of the human experience as it took place concurrently in the lands of the Ashanti, the Arawaks, or the Navajos, for instance. We need language that speaks of human history in more inclusive terms. We should arrive at our own vision of ethnology, one which does not perpetuate the pattern of Western scholars looking at peoples of color, but has people of color looking at themselves in search for their own alternative traditions. This reverse ethnology would encourage a way of looking at human culture — past and present — from a panoptic perspective and would not be seduced by the old strategy of construing human history as a motorized train which some peoples have ridden and others have not. Human history follows no racial principle, no development of the mind, but has occurred at random wherever and whenever people have lived.

History, in other words, is not only the sequence of events leading to the victory or predominance of some peoples over others. For people of color there is a more morally edifying history, and that is the legacy of the vanquished. We cannot afford the view that sees achievement only in huge buildings, territorial expansion, and conquest. It will do better for us to celebrate the endurance of those who were crushed by conquest. It is in their legacy of survival and resistance that we will find the necessary models for asserting our dignity. There is a dignified history in the survival of the slaves. There is a heroic heritage coming from the experience of the Maroons. Everywhere in the Americas, for instance, opting for

Maroon life became a frequent alternative to plantation life throughout the slavery period. The fact that our ancestors bore the burden of empire and still managed to persevere in keeping the faith is a far greater achievement than building obelisks or sending battalions to crush nations overseas. The cultural forms of those who lost to military might, to slave traffic, and to imperial expansion constitute veritable documents of the indomitability of the human spirit.

When we look into the archives of our human experience, we must relinquish the imperial imagination that teaches us to admire Alexander's success in the conquest of the Orient or some American general's triumphant expedition in South-East Asia. We ought to learn to recognize achievement in records of a different kind of heroism, such heroism as is attested to, for instance, by the speaker in "Still Here," the little poem by Langston Hughes that says:

> I been scarred and battered.
> My hopes the wind done scattered.
> Snow has friz me, sun has baked me,
> Looks like between 'em
> They done tried to make me
> Stop laughin', stop lovin', stop livin' —
> But I don't care!
> *I'm still here!*
>
> (Hughes 1974:123)

This of course is a more subtle document of achievement than we have been trained to recognize. For we have been made to share the imagination of conquerors even when we are the descendants of the conquered. We need, through the appropriate sort of documents, to get in touch with an authentic imagination, one that accords with the truth of our historical experience. Our students should gain access to those documents. The curriculum can make that possible by freeing itself from the spell that induces an association between achievement and imperial domination.

XIII. Toward Respect for Humanity

I believe a curriculum that sponsors an inclusive view of human culture can foster a more congenial kind of society than we can boast of having at present. Students will profit from knowing that the world is really a very large place and that no country nor race has a monopoly on the beautiful and the good. Their minds will widen if they comprehend that their religion is only one of the numerous and equally legitimate ways for different peoples to grapple with the ineffable. They can love their language without disdaining other languages as less equipped to express the stuff of human existence. They can love their country while admitting that no nation — no matter how powerful — has the right to proclaim itself ruler of the world. Students will benefit from the knowledge that all peoples are ethnic, the dominant as well as the non-dominant, and that a society's advanced technology and industrialization constitute no proof of its members' superior mental endowments or more developed thought processes. Nor will it hurt for students to understand the nature of power as contingent rather than immanent. They should see that the supremacy of certain nations over others does not result from the inherent virtues of the former, nor by divine ordinance, but from determinate historical clashes and transactions, mostly violent and bloody, that make no obeisance to teleological design. It will be to everyone's advantage if our students realize that might is not necessarily right.

One should think that fostering an inclusive view of human culture — a view that perceives the achievements of all peoples throughout the globe from all epochs as legitimate components of the human legacy — will appear desirable to everyone, not just to educators who, like the present writer, can trace their ancestry to the Third World. Juliet Ucelli, an Italian-American public school social worker in New York, has made it plain that one need not be non-European to dislike Eurocentrism and to wish to engage in "a dialogue among peoples...about what constitutes valid knowledge" (Ucelli 1991:16). Perhaps the only means educators of all colors have of seeking to abate the still existing danger of a nuclear cataclysm is the curriculum, which can serve as a vehicle for instilling in students of all colors a basic respect for humanity. The curriculum, if construed in terms that are inclusive rather than exclusive, can offer a remarkably suitable ground for students to ascertain that humanity occurs in many cultures, colors, religions, languages, social organizations, and geographies, and to learn to respect humanity irrespective of difference. We are now pressed by ecological imperatives to assume an amply humanistic stance. With the fate of the entire planet in peril, no group or society can afford the arrogant obstinacy of seeing itself as the only important constituent of the world.

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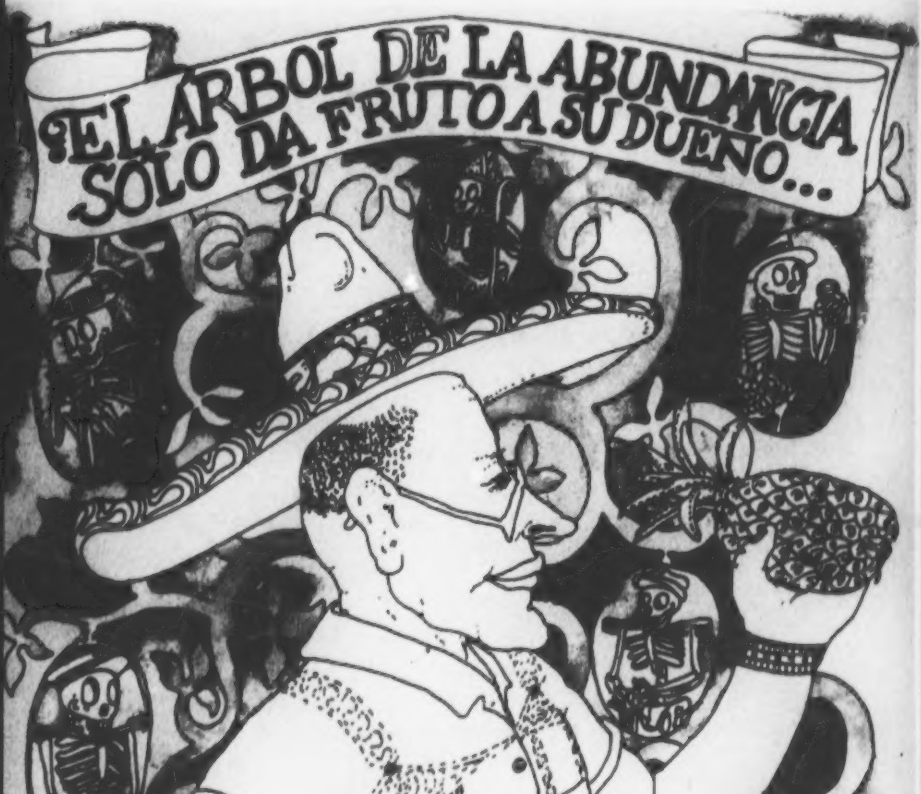
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Submissions should usually not exceed 20 pages. All material, including bibliographies and notes, should be typed, double-spaced on regular 8 1/2" x 11" white bond paper. Manuscripts that require bibliographies and documentation should be prepared in accordance with the latest edition of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. Parenthetical references with bibliographical entries given at the end under "Works Cited" is the preferred citation style in this journal. Name and address of author(s) should appear on each individual page. Please allow a minimum of three moths for editorial consideration. Submit an abstract not to exceed 100 words summarizing the main points of your text.

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All scholarship has an agenda, and all research is informed by an ideology. But while others have often enjoyed the privilege of denying it and claiming absolute objectivity, we, the marginal, are pressed by historical imperatives to acknowledge our agenda and the ideological bent of our work. Our aim here is to serve the cause of the disinherited by lending them a forum via which to voice their deepest concerns....

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